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THE SIEGE AND FALL OF PORT ARTHUR

THE SIEGE AND FALL OF PORT ARTHUR

BY

W. RICHMOND SMITH

CORRESPONDENT OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS AND REUTER'S TELEGRAM COMPANY WITH THE THIRD IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY IN FRONT OF PORT ARTHUR

PREFACE BY

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR W. G. NICHOLSON, K.C.B.

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PREFACE

I HAVE been asked to write a short preface to this book, and I am glad to do so, having had the pleasure of making the author's acquaintance during a three-weeks' voyage across the Northern Pacific in March 1904, and having subsequently renewed that acquaintance at Tokyo and in front of Port Arthur.

In Chapter VIII. Mr. Richmond Smith graphically describes the irritation aroused among the Press correspondents by their long detention in Japan. Such irritation may have been natural enough, but the display of it was futile, and the correspondents who, like the author, kept their tempers and held their tongues were regarded with greater respect by the authorities than those who gave full expression to their impatience and indignation. In fact, no one is less liable to be influenced by strong language than the Japanese official, who has been taught to regard any display of emotion as impolite and unbecoming.

When I visited Port Arthur early in December 1904 I found that Mr. Richmond Smith had housed himself, in company with another Press correspondent, in a cave dwelling, which he had caused to be dug out of the side of a steep hill by Chinese peasants. On the pathway leading up to this habitation a signboard was erected with a Japanese inscription, to the effect that any soldier passing

by, who wanted a cup of tea, would be supplied with it at any hour of the day or night. As Mr. Smith's quarters were in close proximity to one of the main lines of communication within the Japanese position, many soldiers availed themselves of his hospitality, and General Nogi himself called, drank tea, and expressed his appreciation of the kindness shown to his troops. This friendly invitation, combined no doubt with discretion and tact in his dealings with the Japanese officers, rendered Mr. Richmond Smith a *persona grata* with the investing army, and led to his being given all the facilities he desired for observing the incidents of the siege.

As regards those incidents in a tactical aspect I can say but little, as during my short stay in front of Port Arthur I was fully occupied in examining the general features of the position and watching the final assault and capture of 203 Metre Hill. It will be seen, however, that many details of military interest are brought to notice in the present narrative: such as the effect produced by grenades charged with a high explosive, the employment of wooden mortars to project such grenades, the utility of wire screens for the purpose of throwing the grenades aside, the efficacy of shields of various patterns to protect men working at the heads of saps, the arrangements for transporting and mounting the heavy 11-inch howitzers, and the like.

As regards the strategical aspect of the siege, I am tempted to offer a few remarks with special reference to articles which have appeared in the public Press suggesting that the conversion by Russia of Port Arthur into a strong naval fortress

was a costly mistake, and implying that of late years we have wasted much money on the defences of our naval bases, besides locking up as garrisons for these bases too large a proportion of our small regular army.

Had Russia possessed no fortified naval base on the shores of the Liaotung peninsula, it is obvious that on the outbreak of war, in the event of the Japanese fleet gaining, as it did, a local and temporary superiority over the Russian fleet in the Far East, the latter in the absence of reinforcements must have been destroyed, captured, or compelled to seek refuge in neutral ports, where the vessels would have been interned until the end of the war. At that time Vladivostock was icebound, and consequently, though fortified, was not available, even if a withdrawal in that direction could have been safely effected. The Russian fleet having obtained shelter in Port Arthur, it necessarily devolved on the Japanese fleet continuously to watch and blockade that harbour. It also necessarily devolved on the Japanese Army to capture Port Arthur as soon as possible, in view of the existence of a powerful, though distant, Baltic squadron which might be expected to arrive sooner or later in Japanese waters.

The garrison required for the defence of Port Arthur may roughly be estimated at 50,000 Russian troops, while the strength of the Japanese force needed to capture Port Arthur can hardly have been less in the aggregate than 150,000. The events of the war showed that in field operations, when the numbers on either side were approximately equal, the Japanese troops almost in-

variably succeeded in defeating their opponents. It follows then that, if there had been no maritime fortress at Port Arthur, while General Kuropatkin might have had 50,000 additional soldiers at his disposal for field operations, Marshal Oyama's army could have been reinforced by 150,000 men; and it can hardly be doubted that under such conditions the engagements at Liaoyang and between Liaoyang and Mukden would have been more decisively in favour of the Japanese. It is true that Port Arthur fell before the arrival of the Baltic fleet, and consequently that fleet could not be reinforced by the Russian war-ships which had sought shelter there; but the fortress held out for seven months, a period which under normal conditions of naval mobility would have been amply sufficient for a squadron from the Baltic to reach the Far East. On the whole, therefore, it may be concluded that the existence of a strong naval base at Port Arthur was distinctly advantageous to Russia: first, from a naval point of view, as affording protection to the squadron which had been worsted at the outbreak of the war, and giving it the chance of joining the Baltic squadron had the latter arrived before the capture of the base; and, secondly, from a military point of view, as demanding for its investment a much larger number of troops than those composing its garrison.

Of course, if a navy were so powerful and so ubiquitous that its local and temporary loss of sea command in any part of the world would be inconceivable, it might be deemed an extravagance to fortify and garrison naval bases at home or abroad. But war has its chances, and that

nation is wisest which steers a middle course between an excess of defensive precaution on the one hand and too sanguine a confidence in the invariable and universal superiority of its offensive forces on the other.

At page 281 Mr. Richmond Smith ascribes the immunity of the Japanese army from dysentery and enteric to the splendid discipline of the soldiers who, however thirsty, would not touch water which had been condemned by the medical authorities. This may have been the case as a general rule, though sometimes in the field when in contact with the enemy the troops had, I think, to drink whatever water they could get. On such a technical question it is rather presumptuous to offer an opinion, but it is perhaps deserving of enquiry whether the absence of enteric among the Japanese soldiers was not as much due to their vegetarian diet as to the purity of the water which they drank and their habit of boiling it before drinking it. In India, at military stations where, in spite of every precaution, the meat-eating British troops are periodically decimated by enteric, it will often be found that the native population who seldom eat meat, but take no precautions, are immune.

In conclusion, it may be predicted that no reader of this book can fail to admire the courage, resource, and stubborn tenacity of purpose displayed alike by the defenders and assailants of Port Arthur. In his last chapter Mr. Richmond Smith describes the final scene of the drama. In honour of those gallant Japanese soldiers who had fallen during the siege General Nogi caused an altar to be erected, and in the presence of

his army addressed the spirits of the departed in a valedictory oration, the heroic tone of which was rendered pathetic by the fact that of his two sons one had lost his life at Nanshan and the other in the final assault of 203 Metre Hill.

W. G. NICHOLSON.

September 1905.

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THE SIEGE AND FALL OF PORT ARTHUR

CHAPTER I

An epitome of the story of the siege—The naval end of the story—The three great tragedies, a dearly-bought victory, and a premature surrender—The character of the fighting—The use of star-light shells, electric searchlights, and machine guns in combination—The terrible results from the use of dynamite grenades—The two positions, and the wonderful artillery support of the Japanese.

THE story of the siege and fall of Port Arthur is one so full of tragic interest that even the most matter-of-fact narrative of what actually occurred is bound to read like romance. Since Sevastopol there has been no fighting so desperate and sanguinary in its character. The Japanese losses were close to seventy thousand killed and wounded during the operations, while the Russians admitted after the fall more than thirty thousand killed and wounded. The total casualties were, therefore, about one hundred thousand. Large as these figures are, they give but a hazy and inadequate idea of the desperate nature of the struggle. The almost continuous fighting for over five months was marked by three great tragedies, and an important but dearly-bought victory, the

beginning of the end of a gallant defence, which ended in a surrender so incompatible that it must be called premature, and might be designated disgraceful.

Though it is a story in itself, the struggle for naval supremacy in Far Eastern waters formed the first chapter of the fighting about Port Arthur. The utter unpreparedness of Russia enabled the Japanese Navy, upon the night of the 8th of February 1904, to strike a heavy first blow, from which the Russian fleet in Port Arthur never recovered. Culpable mismanagement and inactivity marked every move of the Czar's fleet from that time until the end came.

One of the most brilliant pieces of strategy in the whole war was the landing of the Second Japanese Army in the Liaotung peninsula, and the double movement of forces northward and southward in such a daring and clever manner that all hope of co-operation between the Russian army of the north and the garrison of Port Arthur was utterly blasted. The subsequent advance of the Third Japanese Army through the sea of mountains south and west of Dalny towards the great fortress city was a series of successes, which had a great deal to do with the army entering upon the siege with a light heart, confident that their superb infantry would be able to carry the enemy's position with a rush, as they had already successfully carried field-works of a semi-permanent character during the advance. The fact that Port Arthur had become, during the Russian occupation, one of the strongest fortress positions in the world did not seem to appeal to them in the least. They had taken the place by assault once before, and felt they would do

so again. There was no adequate siege train, six 4.7-inch naval guns being their heaviest artillery. The result of the first attempt was a tragedy, made terrible in character by the tremendous determination of the assaulters—a tragedy which, from the standpoint of sound military strategy, could not be excused even by the reason that the army was required in the north, and that the sacrifice of life was to accomplish the end without resorting to scientific siege operations. The Russian defence against this August assault was masterly in conception, and murderously effective in execution. The Japanese coup was carefully planned to take place between midnight and two o'clock in the morning in a general assault, which was, however, cleverly anticipated by the garrison, and met with a strong counter-attack. Later, when the general assault did come, the garrison was ready. The skilful use of starlight shells, powerful electric searchlights, and machine guns worked in conjunction, wrought awful havoc in the ranks of the assaulters, who made their attack under cover of darkness.

Foiled in their first attempt, the Japanese with astonishing cheerfulness settled down to the hard and laborious work of scientific siege operations. In a month's time the advance works in front of the centre of the Russian position were captured after a stubborn resistance. At the same time efforts were made to secure possession of the last remaining advance works upon the west flank, consisting of an eminence known as 203 Metre Hill and a protecting ridge upon the north-east known as Namaokyama. Though it was nothing more than a strongly fortified field-work, 203 Metre

Hill was the key to the outer line of defence west of the city, and until it was taken no advance could be made against the groups of permanent forts upon that flank. The Namaokyama ridge fell an easy prey to the attack of the troops of the investing army, but for three days the most desperate efforts were made to occupy 203 Metre Hill without success. In the fierce and determined onslaughts made upon it a portion of the position was taken and for a time retained, but the captors were practically annihilated and the remainder of the force compelled to retire.

The second great tragedy occurred on the 30th of October, when a general assault was ordered upon the western half of the line of defence east of the city. It was obvious that this attack should not have been made at such a time, for the sapping trenches and siege parallels were in so incomplete a condition that failure was almost certain. The 3rd of November, however, was the birthday of the Emperor of Japan, and this general assault was designed to enable the army to present to His Majesty upon his natal day the news of a great victory—possibly the capture of Port Arthur. The result of this premature effort, made for sentimental reasons, was a distinct repulse with very heavy casualties.

While the army was meeting with repulse after repulse, the world was informed, and the Japanese nation believed, that the Port Arthur position had been so weakened by the successful capture of essential points of defence that its downfall might be expected at any moment. It was only during the first days of November that the truth was made public concerning what had

actually taken place. The news was received with credulity and amazement in Japan, and dissatisfaction soon became rampant over what was regarded as the failure of the Third Army to even make an impression upon the enemy's position, though heavy casualties had been sustained. This dissatisfaction was accentuated by the knowledge that had the army at Port Arthur finished its work as quickly as had been expected, its presence at the battle of Liaoyang would have converted that indecisive engagement into a great victory. Driven desperate by the knowledge that they were regarded in their own country as having failed in the task entrusted to them, the troops of the Third Army made a third effort to carry the enemy's position by assault. This attempt was made in a spirit closely akin to sheer desperation. There should be no failure this time, for disgrace was bound to be the reward. But they did fail, and failed terribly, after twenty-four hours of the most desperate continuous fighting. This was the third and most awful tragedy of all.

Then came the struggle for the possession of 203 Metre Hill, in which thousands were sacrificed, because it was absolutely essential that there should be an immediate victory to take away the sting of the last repulse and save the reputation of the army at home. It was known that if the hill were taken the Russian fleet would be at the mercy of Japanese guns, or would be compelled to leave the harbour and meet the fleet waiting outside. Sapping operations had not yet been completed, but there was no time to wait. Nine days and nine nights the fighting was kept up with unabated fury as nearly continuously as the physical strength

of the troops would permit. Half a dozen times the hill was taken and retaken, until its slopes were a veritable shambles and its crest pounded out of all semblance to its former shape. This victory, though it was followed by the utter destruction of the Russian fleet in the harbour, and marked the beginning of the end of the siege, was perhaps the greatest of all the tragedies.

The defence of the guarding forts upon the western half of the line of defence east of the city, after they had been blown up with dynamite mines, was in every sense worthy of the brave and determined previous defence put up by the Russian garrison from the first days of the siege. The proposal to surrender came as a complete surprise to the army which had forced it, for everyone supposed that the determined nature of the defence up to that time argued a fight to the finish. It is absolutely certain that if the garrison had been properly led and officered the siege would have lasted much longer than it did, in spite of the most determined efforts of the besieging army. This is shown by the fact that, although there had been four months of the hardest kind of fighting before 203 Metre Hill was captured, the defensive strength of the Russian position had not been materially impaired. Not one of the permanent forts had been captured, and the lines of defence east and west of the city were still intact. The loss of 203 Metre Hill was a disaster to the garrison, for it rendered the outer line of defence west of the city untenable; but a much greater catastrophe to the Russian cause was the death of General Kondrachenko a few days afterwards, for

with him died the spirit of determination which had made the defence up till that time one of the most gallant in the history of modern warfare. Afterwards the end came quickly in the form of a capitulation, which proved that General Stoessel, the commander of the garrison, had not really commanded during the earlier days, and that he was wholly and entirely unfit for the position he occupied.

The fighting from first to last was of the fiercest description. Practically none of the usages of civilized warfare were recognized. Again and again the wounded were deliberately fired upon and killed. The Hospital Corps in their work of gathering the wounded had no immunity from the enemy's fire. Quarter was neither asked nor offered in the scores of hand-to-hand encounters which marked every stage of the siege, yet when all was over the opposing forces fraternized in the most astonishing manner. The skilful use of starlight shells, electric searchlights, and machine guns in combination during the first general assault in August, resulted in such awful carnage, that thereafter the Japanese made all their big attacks during the day, or at least began them so that they reached close quarters before the searchlights could be used to show up their advances. The use on both sides of dynamite in the form of hand-grenades, from the earliest days of the siege, gave the fighting so terrible a character that, if the extensive use of these grenades as a weapon in the hands of opposing forces becomes general, it is doubtful if any civilized troops will be found willing to engage in active service. With the modern rifle and bayonet, and the increasing use of artillery

and high explosive shells, war has already become a veritable hell, in which the individual soldier takes more chances of death than at any time heretofore; but with the extensive use of dynamite hand-grenades as an offensive and defensive weapon, a new and frightful element has been introduced into modern warfare, which still further reduces the chances of the soldier.

The general features of the country around Port Arthur made it about as suitable for attack as for defence. The weakness of the line fortified by the Russians lay in the fact that it was too close to the city and the various workshops, arsenals, depots, and magazines. This, however, did not warrant the amazing lack of knowledge displayed in the placing of the fortress artillery, which was too often full upon the skyline. The result was that the guns became marks for the Japanese artillery, and suffered in consequence. The position taken up by the investing army was also well suited for the placing of artillery, and the Japanese placed their guns so well that they suffered very little indeed from Russian practice. Though all three of the great assaults made upon the Russian position ended disastrously, nothing could have been more wonderful than the artillery support which accompanied them. Perhaps the greatest lesson of the siege was the great success which attended the extensive use of artillery for concentrated fire previous to and during infantry attacks. In the placing of artillery the Japanese have few equals and no superiors. It would be impossible to imagine guns more perfectly located. At first their practice was not particularly good, but it improved. Their methods were

splendid, and the rapidity with which they turned a perfect tornado of concentrated fire on a position to be attacked by infantry, and sustained that fire, was responsible for many remarkable successes. One of the cleverest moves made by the artillery was the marvellous manner in which the siege train was brought together. It consisted at first of some six 4.7-inch naval guns and a few batteries of small howitzers. No further guns were ordered until they were found to be needed, and then those that best suited the purpose were selected. The utilization of eighteen 11-inch coast defence howitzers was a masterstroke of genius. Never before had guns of this size been used in siege operations, as they were thought too unwieldy for use in the field. The manner in which they were brought from Japan and mounted at various points along the investing lines compelled admiration. There is no doubt that their five-hundred-pound shells did more than anything else to break down the Russian defence.

With regard to the Japanese infantry, it is impossible to speak too highly. They possess the essential qualities of good soldiers to a remarkable degree. They showed themselves to be utterly fearless, and possessed of an intelligence which enabled them at times to act upon individual initiative, with very good results. The Russian soldier is equally fearless, and defended his positions with remarkable tenacity as long as he was ably led. He lacks, however, the intelligence of the Japanese, and never acts upon individual initiative. Well led, he is splendid material; badly led, he is worse than useless. It has

often been maintained that, though the Japanese fight well as long as they are successful, they could not stand defeat for any length of time. No army ever suffered greater reverses than did that which invested Port Arthur. For over four months they were terribly beaten in every effort. Under the greatest punishment they displayed remarkable patience and persistence. The more often they were defeated, the more desperately they fought. At no time was there ever any question of tamely submitting to repulse. The fiercest and most utterly savage assault of the siege was in the last general attack made upon the 26th of November.

The great majority of casualties suffered upon the Japanese side during the one hundred and forty-seven days of the siege were sustained in the three great assaults upon the enemy's position, not one of which could be defended upon the ground of sound military strategy. Splendid as those attacks were, it was obvious that less impetuosity would have given the same results with fewer casualties. The mistakes were due to the fact that the army was strongly imbued with the conviction that the place ought to be taken by assault, and scientific siege work was only resorted to when circumstances compelled it. Even then, for other than military reasons, assaults were made that were almost certain of failure before they were begun. Though the enormous casualty list of nearly seventy thousand killed and wounded was due largely to these unwise attacks, the price was paid, and ungrudgingly paid, by the Japanese nation for the capture of Port Arthur.

CHAPTER II

The Japanese conception of military duty and service—The origin and evolution of the military system—The reason why the Japanese are good fighters—The system of conscription—Terms of service and the training of the reserves—Essential details of the military organization.

In order to understand the reason for the remarkable development of Japan as a military and naval power, and explain the secret of her present successful campaign against one of the greatest military nations of Europe, it is necessary to know and appreciate the national conception of military duty and service, and the extent to which that conception is an essential part of the national life and deepest convictions of the people. In the attitude of the nation towards the Emperor is to be found the great underlying principle upon which the primary idea of military service rests. The Emperor of Japan occupies the most unique position of any ruler in the world. He is not only the absolute temporal monarch, but he is also the corporeal manifestation of his people's conception of the Deity. Even from the earliest days the Emperor has occupied this position. The belief in the divine origin of the Mikado is the great fundamental idea around which everything in the life of the nation is centred. Throughout centuries the whole national fabric has been created with this belief as its foundation-stone. Even when the first civilizing influences, with Confucian

doctrines and the Buddhist religion, came to Japan from China and India, they were not adopted in their entirety, but were assimilated and adapted to the dominant idea of the nation, which centred in the origin and position of the Emperor. This accounts for the remarkable differences to be observed in the creed of Buddhism as it exists in Japan and in India. It also explains the reason why Confucian doctrines only took root in Japan after they had been made to conform with this idea.

Whether a Japanese is a Buddhist or a Shintoist he always pays homage to the Emperor as the manifestation upon earth of his conception of God. He does not worship God as Western people do: he pays homage to, and strives by emulating God-like attributes to attain God, who with him is not personified as with us, but is an ideal of perfection with many manifestations. Japanese mythology insists that the first Emperor was the Son of Heaven because during his life he exhibited many of the attributes of the ideal. His life on earth was one of self-abnegation inasmuch as he lived for the uplifting and happiness of the nation. His successors, because of their origin, and because they were regarded as the benevolent fathers of the nation, have always been considered as more than mere temporal rulers. There are two great popular creeds of Buddhism in Japan. The Mahayana, or philosophical form is, generally speaking, restricted to the educated classes. It aims at a state of Nirvana in which the soul, retaining consciousness, becomes insensible to all worldly feelings, sensations, and emotions. Buddha is not regarded as God, but all Buddhas are manifestations of different attributes of the Great Invisible

Something into which all true believers of Buddhism aim to be absorbed after death. The great central figure in this faith is the Emperor, who is revered and paid homage to as the representative of the ideal which all strive to attain.

Sho-jo is the more popular form of Buddhism among the masses. It teaches that there is a future state of existence with a paradise and perdition, each of which states is divided into several grades of happiness and misery. Unlike Mahayana, this popular Buddhism admits of the personification of the Ideal in Shaku Muni, the Great Buddha or Christ of the faith, who is regarded as the Mediator between the believer and the Great Invisible Ideal into which all aim to be absorbed. In this faith, also, homage is paid to the Emperor as the corporeal representative on earth of the Deity.

Shintoism, another form of faith popular with the masses in Japan, teaches that the soul exists after death: that the spirits of the good are absorbed into Heaven, while those of the wicked are sent to Yomi, which, being translated, means darkness, or the lower world. Homage is paid to the departed spirits of the good, and their noble acts while on earth emulated by the living. In Shintoism, as well, the Emperor is paid homage to as the manifestation of God upon earth. The position of the Emperor with regard to the Japanese conception of Kami, or God, is indicated in the second article of the Constitution, which states that the person of the Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

It is no easy matter to induce even the broadest-minded Japanese to discuss this question of the mental attitude of the nation toward the Emperor. But for the fact that it is being shown in a thousand

different ways in connection with the service of soldiers and sailors in the present war, it is doubtful whether strangers would ever have been made aware of its existence, or the extent to which it enters into, and is an essential part of, the deepest convictions of the nation. In some of the houses of the most cultured and best educated Japanese to-day, there is a worship-room in which the family bow down in devotion before an altar upon which are pictures of the Emperor and the Empress. When education became universal, with the establishment of the common school system throughout the Empire, the moral lessons taught all tended to nourish and develop the spirit of devotion to the Imperial person. The personal virtue and wide influence of the present Emperor, who is universally regarded as one of the greatest rulers Japan has ever had, has made this an easy task for the teachers. The Emperor's diligence and wise thoughtfulness in public affairs are held up as examples for all his people to imitate. There is not a school, in however remote a part of the Empire, in which there are not portraits of the Emperor and the Empress. Before these portraits homage is publicly paid at least twice a year, on the natal days of both their Majesties. Upon other occasions also, according to the customs of the locality, the place where the Imperial portraits are kept, is opened, and teachers and pupils make obeisance before them. The result is, that with the dissemination of education and the influences of Western civilization, the devotion of the nation to the Emperor is increasing rather than diminishing. During the existence of the Shogunate in feudal days, the Emperor took practically no part in the government of the country.

He was adored as a god, but he was completely out of touch with the nation. When the feudal system disappeared in 1868, and the present Monarch assumed absolute power, he at once became the dominant element in the whole national life, with the result that the people not only revered and paid homage to him as God, but learned to know and love him as the wise and beneficent father of his people. It is impossible to over-estimate the enormous influence this has had in concentrating in the Imperial person the traditional loyalty of the people to their feudal lords after the feudal system was done away with at the time of the restoration. Though the nation has since that time undergone a wonderful transformation under the influence of Western civilization, the person and position of the Mikado is a more potent factor in the national life than ever before.

The attitude of the nation towards the person and position of the Emperor has an exceedingly vital effect upon the army and navy. In it one has to look for the essential idea in the Japanese conception of military duty and service. It explains the marvellous rapidity with which both arms of the military service of the country have been created in accordance with Western ideals, and developed to a point of excellence which is marvellous. The Japanese soldiers and sailors take their profession seriously; so much so, in fact, that they live only for it in times of peace, and die willingly through it in times of war. The British soldier, for instance, fights "For King and Country," inspired by the glorious associations woven round the Nation's flag, the memories which it brings to him of great things

accomplished and noble deeds done under its folds by heroes past and present. For his Nation's flag, and all it means to him, the British soldier has fought and died to win, and ever will. But he never says "Good-bye" to his native shores when sent upon active service, he says "Au revoir"; and though he knows his life will be given if demanded in defence of his country's honour, in the back of his mind is always the conviction that he will return when the fighting days are over to those at home who hold him dear.

The Japanese soldier fights for his Emperor, in whose person and high position are embodied his conception of God, his temporal ruler, his country, and everything he holds dear. A great deal more than mere patriotism is involved in his conception of the service he is called upon to give. Before the conscript leaves the parental roof he bids farewell for ever to all his relatives. He does not count upon returning, nor do they expect that he will. He has given his life, literally, to the Emperor. If it happens that he is engaged to be married at the time the call comes, his engagement is formally broken; if he has property, he indicates formally how it is to be disposed of—not in the case of his death, but when the news comes that he has met a glorious end.

Almost the entire navy and army is conscripted from the enormous agricultural and sea-faring population. Physically the conscripts are in good condition. Though they are intensely fond of their homes and families, there is no holding back among them when the call to arms goes forth. It is regarded as a glorious privilege, not a duty, to give their lives for the Emperor; and mothers,

instead of regretting that the call has included their sons, sigh because they have not more sons to give.

The Emperor of Japan is the Generalissimo of the army and the navy. Throughout the present war the extent to which he is regarded as the nation's Deity, in whose cause soldiers and sailors are glad to die, is indicated in the reports of victorious admirals and generals, who invariably attribute their victories to the illustrious virtue of His Majesty. This language is not merely the use of honorific terms in referring to one occupying a high temporal position. It clearly indicates the mental attitude of the Japanese towards their Ruler, in which he is regarded as a great deal more than a temporal Monarch.

No better evidence could be adduced to show the enormous effect the attitude of the nation towards the Emperor has had in the past in creating, and now exercises in keeping alive, the Japanese conception of military duty and service, than is to be found in the extraordinary story of how the present navy and army were brought into being. It is just half a century since Commodore Perry, of the United States Navy, acting under instructions from the Government at Washington, appeared with a few battleships off the coasts of Japan, and made the peremptory demand that the country, which had been rigorously closed to strangers for hundreds of years, should at once be opened to foreign intercourse. The demand was complied with, but none too gracefully, for the people generally had little disposition to allow foreigners to invade their country. Japan was at that time in the grip of a powerful feudal system

that had existed for centuries. Whole provinces were ruled over by feudal lords called Daimios. As far back as records go these Daimios had armed retainers called Samurai, who went about at all times armed with two swords. They were, of course, only a small fraction of the population, but they were the only fighting men of the nation. Their sole mission in life was to fight the quarrels of their feudal masters. As can easily be imagined, there was great rivalry among these Samurai. Prowess at arms was their badge of honour; death, rather than defeat or surrender, was the religion of their class. In the eye of the law they were privileged. They alone had the legal right to carry arms. Through centuries these Samurai had become an exclusive, close corporation of hereditary warriors. The only way in which a man not born the son of a Samurai could enter this exclusive body was by proving himself worthy of adoption into a Samurai family. The standard of excellence among these hereditary warriors was an exceedingly high one. So much did this become the case that it came to be said that the soul of a Samurai lay in his sword.

For centuries the real rulers of the country had been the most powerful of the feudal lords, who by right of might constituted himself the chief executive and military officer of the Emperor under the title of Shogun. Though these Shoguns were virtually the masters of the Emperors, they never once attempted to usurp the throne. Nominally, at any rate, their power to rule always came from the Mikados, who for centuries had no connection with their people except through the Shoguns. The consequence of this exclusion of the

Emperor from all contact with the nation was that he was regarded only as the nation's Deity. The Shoguns, in order to retain the actual reins of government, fostered this conception of the people that the person of the Emperor was too sacred to permit of his taking active interest in mundane affairs. As has always been the case with feudal systems, it was a rule in which might was right. The growing discontent of the people was accelerated by a weakness and effeminacy in the court of the ruling Shoguns, who had held the reins of government for hundreds of years. Internecine strife was rampant; there was no strong hand to compel order, and the masses suffered in consequence. The compulsory opening up of the country to foreign intercourse hastened the end of the Shoguns' rule. After a desperate struggle in 1868 the present Emperor was restored to absolute power, and the last Shogun of the powerful Tokugawa House relinquished his high office. With the abolition of the Shogunate went also the entire feudal system, with all its arbitrary powers and hereditary privileges. It disappeared in a few months, practically without bloodshed, once the Shogunate was abolished. With it, of course, went the Samurai as a special and privileged class of hereditary warriors. All men were made equal in the eye of the law. But with the disestablishment of the Samurai, the country was left absolutely without a military force. The national needs required immediately the creation of both an army and a navy of greater numerical dimensions than the old Samurai force had ever been. It was a national army and navy that the country needed, now that its long-closed doors were opened to the

world, and it was launched upon the perilous sea of international relations. Here an enormous difficulty was encountered.

Among all the teeming millions of the population the Samurai had from all time been Japan's only warriors. The loyalty of the Samurai to their feudal masters was a cherished tradition of the country. These men were now professionless, and bitterly resented the abolition of the powers and privileges of their masters, whom they had served, generation after generation, for centuries. How to transfer the loyalty this class felt for its old masters to the person and service of the newly-rehabilitated absolute monarch, who had for centuries been revered as a god rather than served as a ruler, was the first difficulty which faced the advisers of the Emperor in the effort to create a national army and navy. How to transfer the warlike spirit and high conception of military duty and service from the Samurai to the people who had never fought themselves nor their fathers before them, was the second difficulty encountered. As evidence of the truth of the old adage, that out of the great need of a nation there is always born the man to supply that need, there arose in Japan a man in whose brain was born the scheme which solved the difficulty, and out of which was evolved the present army and navy of the country. This man in feudal times was a simple Samurai retainer of the Great Prince of the Province of Satsuma, from whence came one of the strongest clans which took sides with the Emperor in the struggle which resulted in the downfall of the Shogun. General Saigo, the Great Saigo as he is now called in Japan,

served with distinction in the war of the restoration. Later, he was the leader of the army which quelled a serious rebellion in the northern part of the Empire. When peace finally came under the new order of things, he was made an Imperial Privy Councillor, and became one of the most trusted advisers of the Emperor in the active administration of the affairs of the country. Japan was by this time acquiring considerable knowledge of Western civilization. The ablest military men in the Empire had been sent abroad to study the systems of the great Western world, and from knowledge thus acquired, General Saigo evolved a scheme for raising a national army by conscription, utilizing the now professionless Samurai as officers. The scheme was crystallized into law, and in this way were Japan's present navy and army called into being. It is needless to say that the newly-created military system, the rank and file of which were mainly composed of men who had never fought before, was unpopular generally with the Samurai class, who resented the idea that conscripts should be called upon to perform duties for which they were so manifestly unfit, duties which heretofore had belonged peculiarly to the Samurai class. The closer relations between the Emperor and his people, which was one of the outcomes of the restoration, made his expressed wishes a potent factor in fusing warring interests and overcoming traditional prejudices. By his wish the new army and navy were duly created and officered by the unwilling Samurai. It was not long before this embryo army was most severely tested, and, paradoxical as it may seem, tested against a rising of rebellious Samurai led by

the very man whose genius had called it into being.

While the new system was yet in the chrysalis stage of its development, a serious disagreement arose among the advisers of the Emperor over the question of dealing with Korea, because of an insult offered the Japanese flag. One party, headed by the great Saigo, advocated the sending of a punitive expedition against the Koreans; the other favoured the settling of the difficulty by diplomatic negotiations. The course advised by General Saigo was not adopted, whereupon he resigned his position on the Council, and retired to his native province of Satsuma. The fighting men of that province, who regarded Saigo as their leader, and for whom they had a veneration amounting almost to idolatry, at once rallied about him, their numbers augmented by malcontents from every part of the Empire. Finally, General Saigo placed himself at the head of a rebellion in 1878, not against the Emperor, but against his advisers. Troops of the new national army were despatched to quell this Satsuma Rebellion, as it was called. This army, composed mainly of sturdy tillers of the soil, while it greatly outnumbered the rebels, was practically beaten before it started. Though officered by Samurai, the rank and file had no confidence whatever in their ability to stand up against the Satsuma men, led by the greatest warrior and ablest leader of men in the nation. When the opposing forces met, the records say that the rebels openly flouted and jeered their opponents. The efforts of the Samurai officers to infuse some confidence into their commands were without avail; they were beaten again and again, as they expected

to be beaten. The Government at Tokyo, realizing the danger of the situation, and knowing the disastrous effect ultimate and utter defeat would have upon the already wavering *esprit de corps* of the conscript army, adopted a wise course to prevent such a catastrophe. The Imperial Guard, a small force of picked Samurai, every man of whom had a personal reputation for courage and prowess at arms, and whose duty it was to guard the sacred person of the Emperor, was sent to reinforce the new army. The police force of the country, which was recruited principally from among the Samurai, was also mobilized and sent to the front. This infusion of the Samurai spirit into the raw levies of non-fighting men changed the whole tide of victory. The rebels, in spite of their able leadership, were driven from pillar to post, and were finally utterly defeated. Their leader, the Great Saigo, beaten by the national army his genius had created, according to traditional custom, committed "hara kari." With the death of Saigo strife was abolished from the Emperor's Council. It is interesting to note in this connection that, so profound is the universal veneration for the memory of the Great Saigo, despite his rebellious death, that the Emperor was induced to pardon him. To-day, his son is Marquis Saigo, a title conferred in consideration of the great services rendered the nation by his illustrious sire.

The effect of this first test of the troops of the new army was marvellous. Through generations the common people had often aspired to become Samurai, but that class in feudal times had always been a close corporation. It is true that the martial spirit of the nation had from time to time

outcropped against this exclusion in the formation of bands of Nobushi or field Samurai, who went about pillaging the rich and strong, and, in many cases, succouring the poor and weak. During the reigns of the Shoguns of the Tokugawa House, these chivalrous bandits became so numerous that a war of extermination was carried on against them. Again the martial spirit of the nation revolted against the exclusiveness of the Samurai class, this time in the form of a guild of unrecognized fighting-men who earned a precarious living by gambling. Because of the services this guild rendered the State in hunting out criminals, they were finally recognised by the Shoguns' Government, and permitted by law to carry a single sword. Leavened with the spirit of the Samurai, and confident of their own power and ability to fight because of their victory over the rebel army composed entirely of trained Samurai led by the ablest general of the day, the new conscript army became convinced that its legitimate function was to take the place of the old fighting class, and protect the country against what the whole nation then feared would be the outcome of the open door—the gradual encroachment of Western Powers upon the land they loved so well. The rapid introduction of Western ideas with regard to both arms of the military service, the adoption of the modern rifle and the consequent abolition of the sword, the skilful handling of which could only be attained by a lifetime of practice, put the Samurai more upon a level with the conscript, for he, too, had to learn the new methods of modern warfare. The great administrator of the military system after the Satsuma Rebellion, and the man

who is to-day honoured as the father of the army of modern Japan, is the present Field-Marshal, Marquis Yamagata, though the memory of the Great Saigo, despite his rebellious death, is revered as the creator of the idea. After the close of the Satsuma Rebellion, under the wise and able direction of Marquis Yamagata, Japan set to work with a will to create a modern army. Gifted with wonderful imitative powers, she copied much that Western modern progress had evolved, and adapted it to her national needs, displaying excellent judgment in selecting the best that each Western country could give her. Naval and military officers, the best and cleverest the nation could give, were sent abroad to study the military systems of the Western world. Absolutely free from prejudice, these officers were able to assimilate ideas gathered from every one of the systems of the great European Powers, and combine the best features in each. Thus to-day, the Japanese Navy is using the best of modern ships, equipped with the latest inventions and appliances that Western experience can give. In the training of crews, the enormous experience of the British Navy has been largely drawn upon, but the system used in the British Navy has not been adopted in its entirety. The systems of other naval Powers have also contributed, where it was considered that features in the British system were weak. With the army the same thing is true. The German military system appears to have appealed more strongly to the Japanese than any other in Europe, but it would be a serious mistake to assume that their military organization is in any sense a copy of the German. There is not one of the great

military Powers whose various systems have not been drawn upon in the upbuilding of the army system of Japan. Their rifle, for instance, is a modern arm of a most ingenious character, but it is not a copy of any one of the small arms used by other nations. It combines the features of many, and has some ideas, more or less good, which are peculiar to it alone. The system of transport is wonderfully well adapted to Japan and those other contiguous countries in which the army may at any time have occasion to operate. The excellence of their artillery practice, which has been amply demonstrated in the present war, is due to the wholly unprejudiced manner in which they have made selections from the systems of Western countries, and to a native ingenuity which has enabled them in some cases to improve upon what they have learned.

What the West has not given the Japanese is their conception of military duty and service. This conception is indigenous to the country, and has its origin in the fundamental idea of the nation's duty to the Emperor, found in its best and highest form in the Spartan spirit of the old Samurai. The profound veneration of the people generally for the fatalistic conception which the Samurai had of his duty as a soldier has not only kept that spirit alive, but it has contributed to its being transferred bodily to the national army, composed mostly of men who fought their first fight during the Satsuma Rebellion not thirty years ago. The fact that the army and navy are both largely officered by Samurai has contributed to this phenomenon, and in having this splendidly-trained body of Samurai warriors out of which to create

officers for her army and navy, Japan has been in a unique and extremely fortunate position. But in addition to all this, deeper still, in the sentiment of the people, in their attitude towards and belief in the person and position of their Emperor, is to be found the broader basis upon which this conception of military duty and service has been upbuilded in so short a time.

It must not be imagined, however, that every Japanese soldier and sailor is a hero. There are those who fall short of the standard, as there are in every other army and navy. The standard is a high one, and the creed of the soldier makes enormous demands. But, as in most fighting armies, it is easier to live up to the standard, no matter what it is, than to fall below it, for reasons which every soldier knows. Death rather than defeat or surrender, is the standard. For instance, no Japanese general is ever likely to survive defeat, and it is certain that none would ever surrender. That these two contingencies are impossible is shown by the supreme contempt in which the Russian generals from Port Arthur, who are now prisoners in Japan, are held by the people of the country. Though necessarily a cursory and incomplete description of the Japanese conception of military duty and service, this short sketch will serve to elucidate the reason for many extraordinary incidents of the fighting before Port Arthur, and enable the reader to understand many features of that awful struggle which otherwise could not be accurately appreciated or fully understood.

The Japanese Army is raised by conscription. All males who have reached the age of twenty

years are liable to be called upon for military service. The conscript first serves a term of three years in the standing army. There are in addition three reserve forces. The first is used to bring the standing army up to war strength and to form depots. The term of service for this reserve is four and one-third years after serving three years in the standing army. The second reserve is organized in separate units, and supplements each division of the standing army, intact in mobilization. It consists of one brigade for each division. The term of service in this reserve was five years after finishing three years' service in the standing army until some ten months after the present war started. It was then doubled, with practically the unanimous consent and approval of the nation, so that the term is now ten years after a three years' term in the standing army. The first and second reserves are called out for not more than sixty days' drill each year, and in times of war or danger. Although these reserves are called out every year as a force, each man is called upon in times of peace only during his second, fourth, sixth, and ninth years of service. The third reserve, which is known as the conscript reserve, is composed of those in excess of the numbers required for the standing army, and are liable, for one year only, to be called upon to make up deficiencies in the standing army. The term of service is seven and one-third years. This force is called out for primary instruction, including ninety days' drill for the first year, sixty days' drill during the second and fourth years, and in times of war or danger. In times of peace this force is distributed among the units of the standing army. In times of war it is made to form

independent depot battalions. The Japanese standing army consists of thirteen divisions, the Imperial Guard and twelve divisions of the line, with two extra cavalry and artillery brigades stationed near Tokyo. The Guards division is quartered at Tokyo, and is under the immediate order of the Emperor. The divisional districts are divided into groups of four districts each, which are under the command of the Field-Marshal or a general. The divisions of three of these groups of four districts each are known as the east, west, and centre armies. Their headquarters are at the capital city of Tokyo, the commercial metropolis of Osaka, and the town of Kokura, the centre of the great western districts of the Empire.

Lines of communication in times of war are organized outside the divisions. Every army in the field is supplied upon the requisition of the General Officer Commanding to the Quartermaster-General in the War Office in Tokyo, who arranges for all supplies required, which are shipped from the main bases in Japan to the depot base of the army, which is under the direct control of the General Officer Commanding the army. The necessary supply columns between the depot base and the army are taken partly from the country and partly made up of men not taken by conscription, or otherwise ineligible for the fighting force. In the field each division of the army has its supply base under the direct command of the General of the division.

Though it often varies, the war footing of the army contemplates that an army should comprise either two or three divisions of infantry. Exclusive of officers, a division has 11,154 men, a brigade

5572 men, a regiment 2778 men, a battalion 920 men, a company 230 men, and a section 70 men. The cavalry is divided into brigades of from 816 to 1224 men, with regiments of 408 men, squadrons of 135 men, and troops of 34 men. In the artillery, a brigade consists of 18 batteries of 106 guns, a regiment of 6 batteries of 36 guns, a battalion of 3 batteries of 18 guns, a battery of 6 guns, and a section of 2 guns.

There are three grades of soldiers in the ranks, and they wear distinguishing badges. A recruit upon joining is a second-class soldier. After completing six months' service, promotions are made to first-class and superior soldiers, the two higher grades among the rank and file. These promotions are supposed to be made absolutely upon the basis of merit and efficiency. Between the non-commissioned officers and the commissioned subaltern there is a warrant officer called the sergeant-major. He wears a uniform similar to, but not quite the same as, a commissioned officer, but he does not belong to the officers' mess. There is one of these officers to each battery, squadron, and company, and his duties are those of an officer. The total weight carried by an infantry soldier in full marching order is nearly fifty-seven pounds including the rifle, a strong and serviceable arm, which weighs nine pounds eight and a half ounces with a sword-bayonet. In addition to one hundred and fifty rounds of ammunition carried by each soldier, one hundred rounds per man is carried on battalion transport, and another hundred rounds upon the ammunition column, making in all three hundred and fifty rounds. The daily rations of a soldier consist of one quart of rice, one-third of a pound

of beef or fish, one-third of a pound of vegetables, and six-tenths of an ounce of saké, the national spirituous beverage of the people, which is made from fermented rice.

The divisional complement of artillery is one regiment to a division, armed with either field or mountain guns, or both. These guns are made in Japan. The field gun has a range of seven thousand yards, and, though so called, is not a quick-firing gun. The mountain gun is of the same calibre, though much shorter. It requires four horses to carry it when dismounted, and a fifth horse for ammunition. The gun limbers contain forty rounds of ammunition, the waggon limbers forty rounds, and the waggon bodies fifty rounds. The ammunition boxes for mountain guns hold seven rounds each. Though the Japanese had very few of either machine or automatic quick-firing guns, those they had were, to all intents and purposes, copies of English patents made in Japan. The machine guns were fed from brass hoppers and not from belts, and great difficulty was experienced in getting the ammunition to feed properly. More often than not, when most required, the guns jammed when fired with any rapidity.

The population of the Empire is, roughly speaking, about forty-seven millions. In February of 1905 there were equipped and in the field close upon half a million troops. Taking into consideration the heavy casualties sustained during the war, the raising of this force has greatly denuded the country of younger men. It is claimed, however, that another two hundred thousand soldiers are available for service, and could be equipped if required.

CHAPTER III

The *coup d'état* by which Japan declared war and struck a deadly blow at Russian naval supremacy at the same time—The consternation which the attack caused inside Port Arthur—Sketch of the naval fighting which followed—The unpreparedness of the fortress to withstand a land assault—The attempts to block the mouth of the harbour—The reasons for the inactivity of the Russian fleet—The sinking of the *Petropaulovsk* and the death of Admiral Makaroff—The landing of the Second Japanese Army near Pi-tzu-wo.

THE first shot in the war was fired at Port Arthur. Under cover of night upon the 8th of February 1904 a Japanese torpedo flotilla crept towards the narrow entrance to the harbour, and under the frowning guns of the greatest fortress position in the Far East, sent messengers in the shape of deadly torpedoes, which carried with them not only a declaration of war, but destruction to the Russian fleet as well. About the same time a squadron of the Japanese fleet attacked two Russian warships at the entrance to the harbour at Chemulpo, in Korea, compelled their destruction, and at the same time covered the landing of the first troops of the army which months later fought the battle of the Yalu.

The combined fleet of Japan sailed from the great naval depot at Saseho on the 6th of February with the advance guard of the First Army, and made its way to a rendezvous previously decided upon among the many groups of islands which lie off the west coast of the Korean peninsula. Later on, after the first series of attacks upon the Russian

fleet at Port Arthur, a flying base was established among the Elliott group of islands, which lie off the coast of the Liaotung peninsula, about sixty miles from the entrance to the harbour at Port Arthur. Upon arriving at the rendezvous the following day, Vice-Admiral Togo, in command of the fleet, learned from scouting ships which had been watching the movements of Russian warships, that the whole of the enemy's fleet was lying outside the harbour at Port Arthur, with the exception of the cruiser *Varyag* and the gunboat *Koreetz*, which were in the harbour at Chemulpo. A squadron under command of Rear-Admiral Uriu was detached from the main fleet and escorted the transport flotilla to Chemulpo. It was about five o'clock on the evening of the 8th when the squadron, escorting a flotilla of transports, arrived off Chemulpo harbour. The Japanese cruiser *Chiyoda*, which had been watching events in the harbour for some days, had met the squadron that morning, and reported that it would be quite possible to land the troops despite the presence of the Russian warships. It seems that immediately the *Chiyoda* left the harbour the previous evening the suspicions of the Russian officers were aroused, for the gunboat *Koreetz* was ordered to proceed at once to Port Arthur. She was a short distance from the entrance to the harbour when she encountered the Japanese squadron. What then happened is the subject of controversy. The Russians maintain they were so ignorant of the fact that war had been declared, that the *Koreetz* saluted the Japanese ships, which, instead of replying, placed themselves in her way so as to bar passage. The Japanese claim that the *Koreetz*, immediately she came with-

in range, fired two shots at the fleet and then quickly returned to the harbour. Whichever is the correct story, the *Koreetz* did return to the harbour, followed by the Japanese fleet and transports. During the night the transports disembarked their troops without hindrance. Early on the following morning Admiral Uriu informed the Russian officer in command that a state of war existed, and that unless he left before midday the Japanese squadron would attack the Russian ships in the harbour at four o'clock in the afternoon. At the same time the commanders of the warships of other Powers which happened to be in the harbour at the time were apprized of what was likely to take place and asked to leave. All the foreign consuls in Chemulpo were also warned. A little before noon the two Russian warships steamed out, followed by the Japanese fleet. For a short time the engagement lasted, after which the two Russian ships managed to retire into the harbour. The *Koreetz* was blown up by her crew, and the *Varyag* scuttled and sunk. A Russian passenger ship, the *Sungari*, was destroyed by fire, so that she might not fall into the hands of the Japanese.

In the meantime the main fleet under Vice-Admiral Togo proceeded in the direction of Port Arthur. The night of the 7th was spent in reconnoitring, in spite of a heavy sea which was running. On the following morning, the weather in the meantime having moderated, one torpedo flotilla was ordered to proceed to Ta-lien-wan and a second to Port Arthur, and under cover of darkness sink any Russian vessels they might encounter. The flotilla which went to Ta-lien-wan returned to the rendezvous without having met any of the enemy's

warships, but the other flotilla, which had proceeded towards Port Arthur, discovered the main portion of the Russian fleet lying outside the harbour. The night was dark, and the torpedo-boat destroyers, which led the van of the flotilla, instead of opening fire upon the enemy from a distance, crept slowly in under the forthills until they were so close to the Russian warships that the light from their port-holes gave a distinct idea of their size and form. Suddenly the Japanese flotilla opened fire, creating the greatest confusion on board the enemy's ships. Recovering in a measure from the panic which seized them, some of the Russian ships opened fire. The forts also began to wake up, and for a time there was a heavy cannonade. Meanwhile, in the darkness and under a heavy fire, the Japanese torpedo craft moved quickly forward towards the entrance to the harbour. Their idea was that at least some of the enemy's ships would leave their moorings and try to make for the entrance, and they wished to be in a position, as they turned their broadsides, to launch torpedoes against them. The surmise was correct. The *Czarevitch* and the *Retvezan* were the first to turn, and as they did so, torpedoes were fired at them, with the result that both vessels were badly damaged. The *Retvezan* went ashore on one side of the harbour mouth and the *Czarevitch* on the other, so that the rest of the warships were unable to enter, as the entrance was blocked. After doing what damage it could, the flotilla withdrew from its very dangerous proximity to the enemy's fleet. About one-third of the Russian ships and all the torpedo craft were inside the harbour when this engagement occurred, and consequently took no part in the defence.

The Russians were taken completely by surprise. No one expected war. It was afterwards said that Viceroy Alexieff had been advised from St. Petersburg that the Japanese Minister there had received his recall, but if he had any knowledge to that effect he evidently kept it to himself. The first public announcement of the fact was contained in the issue of the local newspaper, the *Novi Krai*, the following day. The corresponding date for February 8th in the Russian calendar is January 26th, which happened to be one of the many Russian name days. Madame Stoessel, wife of the man who afterwards was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the garrison, and Madame Stark, wife of an army surgeon, were both celebrating their name days with dinner-parties which were largely attended by officers in the navy and the army. After Madame Stark's dinner-party, there was a dance, which was in progress when the torpedo craft of the Japanese fleet made their unexpected attack. The continuous cannonade heard outside the harbour was thought by the inhabitants generally to be the navy carrying out some night manœuvre. The naval officers at Madame Stark's dance, many of whom were, it is said, on shore without leave, knew differently. In a moment all was confusion. Officers of the navy hurried to their ships. In the quarters of the garrison the call to arms came like a thunderbolt. Regiments and companies were quickly marched to their posts upon the fortress, but the panic was so great that many of the officers and men did not know where to go. One company was marched out of the town and into the fortress, but though they had their rifles, the ammunition for them was forgotten.

When the morning of the 9th dawned, the inhabitants of the town were amazed to find that the harbour entrance seemed to be completely blocked. The battleships *Czarevitch* and *Retvezan* could be plainly seen partly submerged and upon the beach on either side of the entrance. The news spread like wildfire. It was war. The Japanese had attacked the fleet outside the harbour during the night. Immediately there was a wild rush for the railway station. The inhabitants quickly gathered together a few valuables, and, leaving everything else behind, crowded the trains running north. The panic became so great during the day that the railway station had to be guarded by the military.

It was about eleven o'clock on the following morning when the Japanese fleet put in an appearance. After manœuvring for about an hour, they opened fire upon the Russian ships. The firing lasted for about two hours, but comparatively little damage was done on either side, owing to the safe distance at which the ships kept from one another. The Russians claim to have sunk two Japanese torpedo destroyers in this fight, but Admiral Togo makes no mention of such a loss in his reports. One of the first shells fired by the Japanese during the engagement struck and set fire to a large warehouse near the mouth of the harbour owned by the Timber Felling Company, whose concessions to cut timber upon the upper reaches of the Yalu River in Northern Korea was one of the causes which led to the war. This strange fact resulted in the remark being made by the inhabitants of the town that the Japanese shells knew where to strike first. The damage

done to the Russian fleet during these two attacks was considerable. The battleship *Retvezan* was not only beached, but so badly damaged that she could not be moved for weeks. The battleship *Czarevitch* was also beached, but some days later was floated and removed inside the harbour. The battleship *Pallada* was struck above the water-line and badly damaged. The cruiser *Askold* was hit below the water-line, and the cruiser *Novik* had her conning-tower smashed, while the gunboat *Angura* was also badly injured. Most of this damage was inflicted during the night attack.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of this initial naval success to the Japanese. Despite the fact that Russia had the larger, though perhaps not the better, fleet when the war opened, the coup at Port Arthur and Chemulpo gave the Japanese at once the naval supremacy in Far Eastern waters which was so absolutely essential to their success in the war. It is possible even greater damage might have been done to the enemy's ships on the night of the 8th had all the Japanese flotillas of torpedo craft taken part in the attack, and had a little more care been taken in the firing of torpedoes. It was a matter of much surprise to naval experts that so little damage was done on this occasion by torpedoes. The Russians were utterly unprepared, and the Japanese, by using the enemy's night signal lights, were able to come to very close quarters before their identity was disclosed. Taking this fact into consideration, it does seem that, out of all those which were fired, more than two torpedoes should have hit the mark. But it is always

easy to criticize after the event. The coup was well planned, and even if the execution did leave something to be desired, it succeeded in its main object.

Though the Japanese evidently did not know it at the time, the land defences of the fortress were in deplorable and wholly incompleted condition. The new forts were still in process of building, and most of the fortress artillery was unplaced, and there was no ammunition available for the guns that were in position. The normal garrison was about fourteen thousand, but more than half of it had been withdrawn and sent to the northern boundary of Korea, where trouble had been expected. Had these facts been known to the Japanese at the time, it would have been a comparatively easy matter for them to have landed a small force upon the shores of the peninsula west of the fortress, and taken it by assault at the same time the fleet was attacked.

From the standpoint of defence Port Arthur may have had weak points, but as a naval base for a fighting fleet it was absolutely impregnable. Its strongest feature lay in the natural conformation of the coast-line. The mouth of the harbour is at the apex of a re-entering angle. This enabled the garrisons of the forts upon the sea front to bring a concentrated and converging fire upon hostile ships. The harbour is landlocked, and entered from the south by a channel about six hundred feet wide protected by submarine mines. The main harbour, running due north and south, is a continuation of the entrance, and is about half a mile in length. At its northern extremity it turns sharply to the west, forming a second

harbour which is known as the West Port. Except at its north end this harbour is very shallow, being little more than mud flats at low tide. From the West Port to the shores of Pigeon Bay, on the west coast of the peninsula, there extends a valley about three miles in length. While the formation of the coast-line about the mouth of the harbour makes it impossible for hostile ships to approach the entrance close enough to carry on a successful bombardment of either the city or the harbour without running great risks, it is possible to bombard either the city or the harbour from the sea off the shores of Pigeon Bay by indirect fire.

Immediately after the Japanese attack upon the 9th, the Russians began laying extensive fields of submarine mines in the waters outside the entrance to the harbour. Mine-laying vessels were also sent to Ta-lien-wan, to place mine fields there, in order to prevent Japanese ships from using that harbour to bombard the commercial metropolis of Dalny, which is situated at the head of the bay. While engaged in this work on the 12th, the mine-laying vessel *Enisie* ran upon one of her own mines and was sunk. About the same time the cruiser *Boyarin* was also struck by a mine, and went to the bottom, close to the entrance to Ta-lien-wan.

Though the Japanese, on one or two occasions at the beginning, pushed some of their heavy warships and cruisers fairly close to the entrance to the harbour at Port Arthur, and well within range of the fortress guns, the experiment was a very risky one, and was not repeated after the investment was completed. The reason was not

so much the danger of their being hit by shells from the fortress guns, but because of the extensive fields of these submarine mines laid by the enemy in the waters about the entrance. To have sent either battleships or cruisers close to these fields would have been to court their destruction. The actual fighting inshore was in all cases done by the torpedo-craft flotillas, while the larger vessels of the fleet stood well off shore, out of range of the fortress guns, and where there was a minimum of chance of their encountering the enemy's mines. From that distance they were able to cover the attacks made by the torpedo-craft flotillas, and were in a position to engage the enemy's ships when they ventured from under cover of the shore batteries and away from their still more dangerous mine fields. Outside the area of the mines laid by the Russians there was a second field laid by the Japanese. The work of laying these mines, where they were calculated to do damage to the enemy's ships while manœuvring under cover of the shore batteries, was one of the most difficult and dangerous tasks of the torpedo-craft flotillas. It was upon one of these Japanese mines so laid that the Russian flagship, the *Petropaulovsk*, came to grief. During all the months the Japanese fleet spent in front of Port Arthur it did not lose a single large warship from the fire of the enemy's guns, but it did lose two of its largest and best battleships, and a considerable number of cruisers, gunboats, and torpedo craft, from the awful effect of mines laid by the Russians.

The second torpedo attack upon the Russian warships at Port Arthur was planned to take place on the 13th of February. The night proved

to be extremely dark and the sea very rough. In consequence the torpedo flotilla became separated before reaching the attacking point. Two destroyers, however, the *Asagiri* and the *Hayatori*, managed to reach the vicinity of Port Arthur. Before daylight the following morning the *Asagiri*, under a heavy fire from the fortress guns and the enemy's ships, succeeded in getting close enough to launch a torpedo against the battleship *Sevastopol.* The *Hayatori* then steamed in and discharged a torpedo at the *Petropaulovsk*, which struck her and caused considerable damage. While this attack was being made, two Russian torpedo destroyers inside the harbour collided, and were both so seriously injured that they were unfit for further service. After their daring exploits the two Japanese destroyers safely reached the rendezvous of the fleet. Just prior to this attack, Viceroy Alexieff, with his civil staff, left Port Arthur. General Stoessel also desired to leave and take up his command in the north, but he was ordered to remain by Alexieff.

From the very beginning there appears to have been considerable friction between the navy and the army in Port Arthur. When disaster came, instead of cementing the differences, the breach grew wider. In addition the navy seemed to be utterly demoralized. The suddenness with which the blow had come upon them seemed to have even robbed them of their *esprit de corps.* They did not attempt to go out and fight the Japanese ships, but remained inside the harbour. Disaffection was rampant when, on the 20th of February, news was received that Admiral Makaroff had been appointed to the

command of the fleet. This seemed to infuse a new life and energy into the navy, and the work of repairing the injuries sustained by some of the best ships was energetically commenced. The dry dock in the harbour was not large enough to accommodate the battleships which had been torpedoed during the first attack. The *Czarevitch* had been taken into the harbour, but there were no means of getting at the great rents which had been torn in her hull by the Japanese torpedo. Finally, an ingenious contrivance was adopted. A large strongly-made box of wood, open upon one side, was securely fastened to the side of the ship with the aid of shear legs, and equipped with rubber sheets placed over the injured part of the hull, to make the joints water-tight. The water was then pumped out of this wooden box, so that workmen could get at the injured plates and renew them. Repairs made in this manner took a long time, but both the *Czarevitch* and the *Retvezan* were patched, and ultimately appeared in the fighting line long after the Japanese thought they were permanently out of commission.

During all this time great uneasiness was felt about the defences of the fortress upon the land side. It was expected that the Japanese would land a force, and it was feared that in its then wholly incompleted condition the fortress would not be able to resist assault. Upon the 16th General Stoessel was appointed to the command of the Third Army Corps, but was ordered to remain in Port Arthur until his successor, General Smirnoff, arrived. Inasmuch as he did not intend to remain in the place long, Stoessel did not take any great interest in its defences. It is said that he was seldom if ever seen during this period. The

work of superintending the completion of the defences fell upon General Kondrachenko. It was an enormous task, but at the head of a force of about eight thousand Russian workmen Kondrachenko worked practically day and night. His industry and cheerful confidence kept up the spirits of the small garrison. The news received on the 22nd, that General Kuropatkin had been appointed to supreme command of the Russian armies in Manchuria, acted as an inspiration, for Kuropatkin's ability was recognized generally throughout the army.

The inactivity of the Russian fleet about this time led the Japanese to make several attempts to seal the entrance to the harbour. The first attempt was made about two o'clock on the morning of the 25th of February. Five old transports were prepared in Japan and loaded with large stones and cement. These ships were officered and manned by volunteers from the navy. The scheme was for the five vessels to steam up to the narrow mouth under cover of darkness, where, by the explosion of an internal mine, they were to be sunk by their crews in such positions as to block the entrance. The stone and cement in their holds would at once solidify into a mass, that it would take months of labour to remove even with the most powerful explosives. With the entrance thus sealed the Russian fleet would be caught like rats in a trap. Though the experiment did not result as successfully as was expected, nothing could exceed the splendid spirit and bravery shown by the officers and crews. The Russians were completely taken by surprise. The hulks had approached quite

close to the entrance before the guns of the battleship *Retvezan*, which was lying beached at the mouth, opened upon them. The forts also opened fire, but their aim was wild. A portion of the channel was successfully blocked, but two of the most important of the hulks missed their bearings in the darkness and went ashore in the wrong place, leaving a sufficiently wide fairway for warships to leave and enter the harbour. One of the hulks was absolutely blown up onto the shore on the left side of the entrance by the force of the *Retvezan's* big guns fired at short range. Next morning, when one of the Russian officers went on board the beached hulk, he found the officer in command lying across his log-book in the cabin with his brains blown out. He had failed to do what was expected of him, through no fault of his own, it is true, but he had failed. The crews of the blocking vessels practically all escaped to the torpedo-craft flotillas, which had come close inshore to cover the attempt and rescue those of the crews of the blocking vessels who succeeded in getting away. When daylight came, sixteen Japanese warships appeared about six miles off the entrance and commenced a bombardment with their big 12-inch guns. The fortress batteries replied, and the enemy's cruisers *Bayan* and *Novik* were ordered to proceed outside and assist. The range of their 9-inch guns, however, was too short, while the shells from the longer range Japanese guns fell thickly about them. They only remained a short time, and then retired again into the harbour. About noon, four Japanese cruisers approached Lao-tieh-shan, where they encountered a Russian torpedo destroyer, which they immedi-

ately attacked and quickly disabled. Cut off from the entrance to the harbour, the crew of the destroyer made for Pigeon Bay, where they landed, and blew the vessel up with a mine.

About this time reinforcements for the garrison began to arrive, and public confidence went up in consequence. On the 6th of March the battleship *Retvezan*, which had up till this time been lying beached at the entrance, was floated and brought inside, where the work of repairing her was begun at once. In order to prevent any further attempts at sealing the harbour, booms were placed across the entrance, and four cargo boats were sunk, so as to narrow down the channel and serve as an obstruction to any further blocking ships sent in by the Japanese. The same day Admiral Makaroff arrived in Port Arthur, and at once took command of the navy. The day following he issued orders that all British and American residents should leave within twenty-four hours. About eleven o'clock the same night two Japanese destroyer flotillas arrived outside the harbour. One flotilla reconnoitred the outer roadstead, and finding none of the enemy's ships outside, lay to and awaited daylight. The second flotilla, however, in spite of a hot fire from the forts, succeeded in laying a number of mechanical mines close to the entrance. When daylight came the first flotilla sighted six Russian destroyers approaching from the south-west. The flotilla immediately closed with four of the approaching destroyers, the other two making their escape. The engagement which followed was of the fiercest description. The Russian destroyers, after being badly damaged, retired towards the harbour. The

Japanese boats by no means got off scot-free, but their injuries were not of such a nature as to render them unfit for further service. A couple of hours later the second flotilla, after completing its work of laying mines in the outer roadstead, was preparing to withdraw when two of the Russian destroyers were seen making for the entrance. They were evidently the two which had made good their escape before the previous engagement. They were at once closed with, and a fierce fight, lasting over an hour, followed. One destroyer, the *Resitelini*, managed to escape in a badly damaged condition, but the other, the *Stregitchi*, was captured after a hand-to-hand engagement. While she was being towed away as a prize of war she sank on account of the injuries she had received. While this last engagement was in progress, the Russian cruisers *Bayan* and *Novik* came out to engage in the fight, but at once returned when they saw the presence of a number of Japanese cruisers which at a distance were covering the attack. About ten o'clock on the morning of the 8th six Japanese warships appeared directly in front of Port Arthur and commenced a heavy bombardment with their 12-inch guns. About the same time three more warships commenced bombarding the harbour and the New Town by indirect fire from the west coast near Pigeon Bay. This bombardment did considerable damage, both to the ships in the West Port and to the buildings in the New Town. In order to prevent its repetition the Russians placed two 6-inch Canet guns upon the west crest of Lao-tieh-shan, and began the erection of a new fort or battery position upon the west slopes of the hill, which they intended

to equip with four more of the same calibre guns. Major-General Smirnoff arrived in Port Arthur on March 12th, and was followed three days later by Grand Duke Cyril. Meantime work upon the land defences was rapidly progressing, and a complete telephone system between all the forts was installed.

During the night of the 21st of March, under cover of darkness, two destroyer flotillas approached Port Arthur and succeeded in laying a number of mines in the fairway close to the entrance. This work was well done, despite the fact that the destroyers were under fire most of the time from the shore batteries. The entire fleet arrived upon the scene about eight o'clock the following morning. The battleships *Fuji* and *Yashima* were detailed to bombard the inner harbour from off the shores of Pigeon Bay, and thus force the Russian ships to emerge from their shelter. They quickly destroyed the new fort which was being constructed upon the west slopes of Lao-tieh-shan. During this bombardment the Russian fleet gradually commenced manœuvring under cover of the fortress batteries, evidently with the intention of luring the Japanese within range. Failing in this, a heavy bombardment at long range was kept up until about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the Japanese fleet withdrew. The number of Russian ships which emerged this time was larger than on any previous occasion, and included five battleships, four cruisers, and ten torpedo craft, besides a number of smaller gunboats.

A second attempt was made to block the harbour entrance on the 27th of March. Four transports prepared for the purpose, under cover of

torpedo-craft flotillas, approached Port Arthur about half-past three o'clock in the morning. They succeeded in getting within two miles of the entrance before their presence was disclosed by the enemy's searchlights. The land batteries as well as the patrol ships immediately opened a bombardment, in spite of which the blocking vessels one by one forced their ways into the channel at the mouth of the harbour. This time the enemy was prepared, and met the attempt with a most vigorous resistance. Two of the four hulks were torpedoed before they reached the spots where it was intended they should be sunk. As a result the attempt to seal the entrance was a failure. The conduct of the volunteer officers and crews upon the blockading hulks was intrepid in the extreme. The manner in which the torpedo flotillas covered the advance of the hulks and afterwards rescued their crews, under a tremendous fire from the enemy's ships and forts, was another specially noticeable feature of the attempt.

On March 29th General Stoessel was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Kwantung garrison, including Port Arthur and Kinchow. Major-General Smirnoff was consequently superseded and left without any special appointment. This fact afterwards led to much friction among the army officers. Grand Duke Boris arrived in Port Arthur on March 30th, accompanied by Viceroy Alexieff. At the same time the strength of the garrison was again increased. A large number of skilled workmen from the naval dockyards in Russia also arrived, and were employed in completing the repairs to the battleship *Poltava*, the repairs to

the *Czarevitch* the *Pallada*, and the *Retvezan* having already been completed.

The next attack upon Port Arthur was fruitful of important results. The Russian flagship, the *Petropaulovsk*, struck a Japanese mine and went down with practically all on board, including Admiral Makaroff and his staff. In spite of the enemy's searchlights, one of the Japanese torpedo flotillas succeeded in laying a number of mines in front of the entrance on the night of the 12th. From Russian sources it was learned, after Port Arthur had fallen, that during the night the commander of one of the Russian guardships at the harbour entrance reported to Admiral Makaroff that there were torpedo vessels outside, and asked if he should fire upon them. The same day, however, eight Russian torpedo destroyers had been sent out upon a reconnoitring expedition and had not yet returned. Fearing that the vessels located outside were the Russian vessels returning, the Admiral gave orders not to fire. By a strange freak of fortune this order probably resulted in the catastrophe which lost the fleet its flagship, and cost the life of its admiral with most of his staff. A little after daybreak on the morning of the 13th, after the mines had been successfully laid, one of the Japanese torpedo flotillas discovered two Russian destroyers making for the harbour entrance. At once placing itself between one of the approaching craft and its objective, the flotilla engaged it, and after ten minutes' fighting managed to sink it. The second destroyer made its way safely into the harbour, and reported that the destroyer *Strashini* had been surrounded by the enemy's ships. The cruiser *Bayan* was ordered to proceed at once to

the rescue. Seeing a number of Japanese torpedo craft about the spot where the ill-fated *Strashini* had disappeared, the *Bayan* approached and opened fire at long range. The torpedo craft drew away, but as the *Bayan* neared the spot four Japanese cruisers attacked her. She at once returned and reported what had occurred. Admiral Makaroff immediately ordered the *Bayan* to lead the way, and with the flagship, the *Pobieda*, *Poltava*, *Peresviet*, *Sevastopol*, *Novik*, *Askold*, and *Diana*, proceeded to make an attack. The Japanese cruisers and torpedo flotilla retired as the enemy's ships approached, and thus lured them out to sea for a distance of about fifteen miles. In the meantime another detachment of the fleet was communicated with, and quickly put in an appearance. Outnumbered, the Russian vessels turned and steamed back towards Port Arthur, followed at a safe distance by the Japanese fleet. The *Petropaulovsk* was only a short distance from the harbour mouth when she struck one of the twin mines laid the previous night. In a few minutes she struck another, and went down with practically all on board. Only six officers, including Grand Duke Cyril and Captain Kokoreff, commander of the ill-fated ship, and seventy-three men were saved. Thirty-one officers, including Admiral Makaroff, and over six hundred men were lost. Thrown into utter confusion by this disaster, which it was universally thought was the work of submarines, the various warships began firing indiscriminately at the water, and quickly made their way into the harbour after rescuing the few survivors of the catastrophe. This occurred a little before eleven o'clock in the morning. The

Japanese fleet remained outside until about one o'clock, and then proceeded to a rendezvous at sea, where preparations were made for continuing the attack upon the following day.

The loss of the largest and best of their battleships was a serious blow to the Russian fleet, but greater still was the death of Admiral Makaroff. The ill-fated Russian Admiral was universally respected for his ability, and loved by his officers and men for his personal qualities. Had he lived, the story of the Russian fleet's inactivity during the entire siege might have been a different one. After Makaroff's death the fleet certainly seemed to lose any power it might have had of concerted and harmonious action, due to an almost open feud between the officers of the army and the navy, and to petty jealousies among the senior naval officers themselves. Makaroff's personality was strong enough to have at least minimised the friction, and prevented the jealousies from having the serious effect they undoubtedly had.

Shortly after three o'clock on the morning of the 15th the Japanese torpedo flotillas were successful in laying more mines. One squadron of the fleet put in an appearance about seven o'clock and reconnoitred the position. All the Russian warships were inside. The second squadron arrived upon the scene about two hours later. The new cruisers, the *Nisshin* and *Kasuga*, which had been purchased from the Argentine Republic, and had recently joined the fleet, were despatched to the shores off Pigeon Bay to open fire upon the enemy's warships in the harbour and force them to come out. The bombardment lasted for

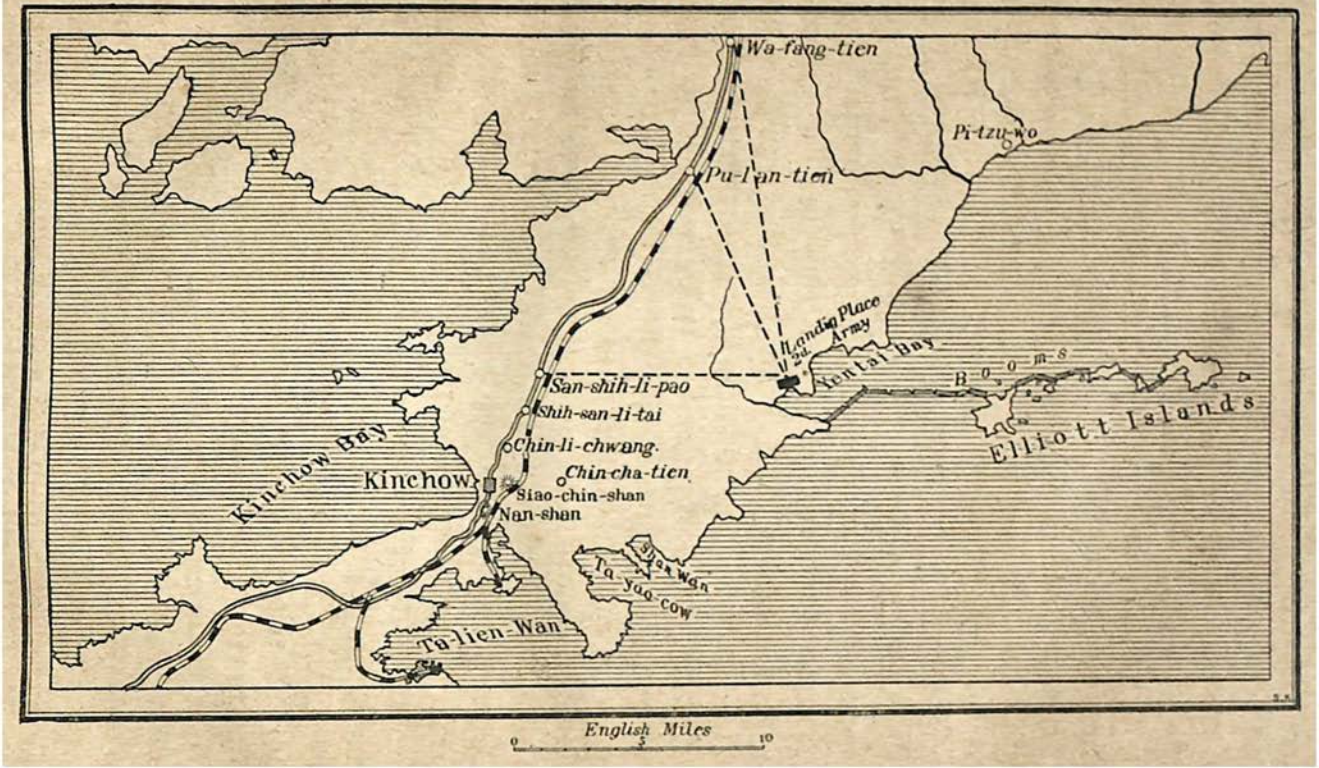
several hours, but the Russian ships contented themselves with replying from inside by indirect fire, while the fortress guns kept the main section of the Japanese fleet at a respectful distance from land. About one o'clock the investing fleet retired. In his report upon this engagement Admiral Togo stated that the reason the combined fleet had been able to achieve some success during this prolonged engagement without losing a single man, despite the fact that day and night the warships had been cruising about in a sea the surface of which was covered with the enemy's floating mines, was in his opinion due to providential help. On the 25th of April the Russian mine-laying ship, the *Nonni*, struck a mine at the entrance to Ta-lien-wan and went to the bottom.

A third and last attempt was made to block the entrance to the harbour upon the 3rd of May. Though the experiment was carried out with great bravery and determination, it ended in failure, and cost the lives of many officers and men. This time eight hulks were prepared, and started from the naval base at the Elliott Islands on the evening of the 2nd. About eleven o'clock a heavy south-easterly gale sprang up, and the flotilla became separated. Efforts were made to establish communication and delay the time for making the attempt until after the weather had moderated, but without success. The commander of the first of the blocking vessels to arrive in front of the enemy's stronghold, thinking from the firing of the fortress guns at one of the torpedo flotillas which was engaged reconnoitring that the attempt had already been commenced, immediately forced

his ship towards the entrance. He was followed by the second blocking vessel, which put in an appearance at that moment. Both made their ways into the narrow channel and were there sunk. In twos and threes the remaining six vessels started for the entrance under a terrible fire from the enemy's fortress guns, and through a sea full of bursting submarine mines. Three succeeded in reaching the channel, where they were duly sunk by their crews. One was blown up by the explosion of a mine outside the entrance, and two others failing to reach their objectives owing to the steering-gear being destroyed were also sunk outside. Five out of the eight hulks had been sunk in the channel, and from this fact Admiral Togo concluded that the entrance had been blocked, and so reported. It was afterwards found that this conclusion was incorrect, for a narrow passage had been left between the sunken hulks through which the Russian warships could leave and enter the harbour. Fully one half of the officers and crews of the blocking vessels perished, despite the heroic efforts made by the torpedo-boat flotillas to rescue them. In his report Admiral Togo expressed the conviction that the story of the heroic conduct of the officers and crews of these blocking vessels would live in the history of Japan. The attempt was a desperate one, and the courage and heroism displayed showed that none of the officers and men who made up the crews of the vessels ever expected to successfully complete their tasks and get away alive. Three of the covering torpedo boats were more or less seriously damaged by the enemy's fire. The Russian fleet during the time

SKETCH MAP OF THE LANDING PLACE OF 2nd JAPANESE ARMY

(MAY 5 1904)



this effort was being made never once appeared. The Japanese fleet arrived upon the scene about nine o'clock upon the following morning, and covered the work of the torpedo flotillas in rescuing the survivors. A heavy fog which came on during the morning rendered this work both difficult and dangerous.

In the meantime, the First Japanese Army, which had landed in Korea some months earlier, had marched north and defeated the Russian force on the 1st of May upon the banks of the Yalu. It had been the intention to land the Second Army in the Liaotung peninsula about the same time, or shortly after the First Army marched towards the Yalu, but the Russians succeeded in securing considerable information about the plans, which made it a risky venture to carry them into execution at that time. In consequence, a flotilla of about one hundred transports, having on board the Second Army, was kept for six or seven weeks in the harbour and river mouth at Chin-nan-po, awaiting a favourable opportunity to effect a landing upon the coast of the Liaotung peninsula directly opposite, across the Yellow Sea. The landing place finally selected was in Yentai Bay, close to the town of Pi-tzu-wo, upon the east coast of the Liaotung peninsula, almost directly opposite the Elliott Islands, then the flying base of the fleet, and about ten miles distant from them. From the great precautions taken to secure the safety of the transports and cover the landing of the army, it is evident that the Japanese anticipated not only opposition upon land, but upon the sea as well. Some twelve miles of heavy wooden booms had been stretched

through the Elliott Islands, and from them to the shallow water off the shore in Yentai Bay. The third squadron of the fleet, with every torpedo craft and gunboat that could be spared from other operations, were detailed to form a screen from the Elliott Islands to the proposed landing place. In this way every precaution was taken to prevent the Russians making a successful torpedo attack while the landing was in progress. A naval detachment with one of the torpedo flotillas reached the landing place on the 5th, shortly after five o'clock in the morning. The torpedo boats fired for some time at a hill a short distance from the coast where the enemy's scouts appeared. The naval detachment was then ordered to land. In small boats they reached a point about one thousand yards from shore, where the water became so shallow that they had to wade the rest of the distance. The landing was effected unopposed, and a small hill close to the shore occupied. At the same time three gunboats were ordered to stand well inshore and divert the attention of the enemy if any appeared. A party of about a hundred, who appeared, was forced to retire by the fire of the gunboats. The transport flotilla arrived at the rendezvous of the fleet on the 5th and 6th and at once proceeded to the landing place. It was a few minutes after eight o'clock upon the morning of the 5th when the first transport of the echelon arrived, and at once began the disembarkation of troops, the naval detachment which had previously landed covering the operation. Though all the troops, after leaving the small boats, had to wade ashore for a distance of a thousand yards or more through water waist-deep,

the landing of the entire army, which occupied days, was completed without any opposition whatever. The Russians were either taken by surprise or had decided to do nothing, for it was soon discovered that they had no large force anywhere near the place. On the morning of the 6th, while the landing of the army was proceeding, a small detachment of troops was sent to the town of Pu-lan-tien, a short distance inland upon the railway, to destroy the telegraph lines and the railway at that point. Another detachment was sent to the town of Pi-tzu-wo, close to the landing place, to cut the telegraph wires there. When they arrived, they found that a force of about two hundred of the enemy's cavalry stationed there had retired the previous morning, taking with them the apparatus from the telegraph office.

Thus was the Second Japanese Army, under command of General Oku, consisting of the first, third, and fourth divisions of infantry, with some cavalry, full divisional artillery and transport, comprising in all about fifty thousand men, landed in the Liaotung peninsula.

CHAPTER IV

The precautions taken by General Oku during and after the landing of his army near Pi-tzu-wo—The dangerous position of the army necessitated the creation of a new supply base in Kerr Bay by the navy—The loss of the battleships *Hatsuse* and *Yashima*—The landing of the sixth and eleventh divisions in Kerr Bay—The capture of Kinchow and the battle of Nanshan.

SIMILAR precautions to those taken by the navy in covering the landing of the Second Army near Pi-tzu-wo against a possible attack from the enemy at sea were repeated by General Oku upon land during the time his army was being disembarked, and in all his movements afterwards. So much has been said about the great amount of good luck which attended the execution of many of the daring pre-arranged plans of the Japanese in landing their armies in the enemy's country, that it is only fair to indicate, now that the necessity for military secrecy with regard to them no longer exists, how much care was taken in the execution of the plans to ensure success. It is true that many of the precautions taken proved to be unnecessary owing to the amazing inactivity of the enemy. But it would have been most unsound from a military standpoint for the Japanese to have counted upon that unpreparedness and inactivity. Much of the success which has attended the work of the Mikado's troops in the present war has been attributed to the marvellous manner in which whole armies

have been moved without even a hint of the plans or movements getting to the public. That is certainly the case, but it is an open secret now that a portion at least of the first pre-arranged plans for the landing of the Second Army in the Liaotung peninsula did become known to the enemy. Though those plans were changed, the Russians ought to have been prepared for what did take place. The story of the landing of the army near Pi-tzu-wo shows that the Japanese expected opposition at sea. The precautions taken by General Oku during and after the landing of the army indicates that he fully expected strenuous opposition on land long before he encountered it.

Almost simultaneous with the arrival of the first transports at the landing place, scouting detachments were sent out. The plans of the army included the immediate destruction of the Russian lines of communication, so that the forces in the Kwantung end of the peninsula, from Nanshan to Port Arthur, would be sequestered from the army under General Kuropatkin in the north. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 6th, a detachment sent to the town of Pu-lan-tien to cut the telegraph lines and destroy the railway at that point, repulsed small bodies of the enemy, and was about to proceed with its work when it was fired upon by a train coming from the direction of Port Arthur. The fire was returned, whereupon the train stopped and a Red Cross flag was flown from it. The Japanese ceased firing, and proceeded to examine the train, when it resumed its journey northward and escaped, going through Pu-lan-tien

station at full speed. The telegraph lines were then cut and the railway line destroyed. In the meantime, another detachment sent to the town of Pi-tzu-wo to cut the telegraph lines found the place deserted by its Russian garrison, and the lines were destroyed without opposition. Two days later, a third detachment, sent to cut the telegraph lines and destroy the railway near the town of San-shi-li-pao, a place about twelve miles north of the town of Kinchow, encountered a small body of Russian cavalry, which was repulsed, and the mission in view accomplished. Four days later, on the 12th, a fourth detachment cut the telegraph lines and destroyed the railway near Wa-fang-tien, about sixteen miles north of Pu-lan-tien.

The landing of the army near Pi-tzu-wo having been completed by this time, General Oku occupied a line across the peninsula from the landing place to a point on the west coast a few miles from Pu-lan-tien. The fourth division, which was the first to land, occupied the west flank in the line, the first division the centre, and the third division the east flank. Strong scouting parties were thrown out both to the north and the south, while the entire army worked quickly southward. Though the railway had been destroyed some sixteen miles north of Pu-lan-tien, and about the same distance to the south, making a gap of some thirty odd miles in the Russian lines of communication between the forces in the north and the south of the peninsula, the position of the invading army, spanning the peninsula in the centre of this gap, was a dangerous one to continue to occupy for any length of time. A concerted

movement of the enemy from the north and from the south would have left the Japanese army open to attack upon two sides. The movement of the entire force southward, in order to strike at the enemy in his stronghold in the town of Kinchow and upon the heights of Nanshan, which barred the narrow gateway to the Kwantung end of the peninsula, meant leaving the supply and retreating base of the army at the landing place near Pitzu-wo open to occupation by the army from the north moving quickly southward. Not only was it essential that General Oku should strike quickly and successfully, but it was also absolutely necessary for him to have a well protected supply and retreating base farther south upon the coast, and nearer the point where his army would have to fight a decisive engagement, at Kinchow and Nanshan. This contingency was evidently well thought out and provided for in the pre-arranged plan of operations. As soon as the navy had successfully completed its task of covering the landing of the Second Army at Yentai Bay on the 12th, the third squadron, with five torpedo-craft flotillas and a number of gunboats and mine-removing vessels, moved down the coast to Ta-yao-kow, or Kerr Bay, which is immediately north of Ta-lien-wan. Covered by the heavier ships of the squadron, the cruiser *Nisshin*, the gunboat *Miyako*, and the torpedo-boat destroyer *Tsukushima* stood well into the entrance to the bay, and carried on a demonstrative bombardment against the land, while the torpedo flotillas commenced the difficult and dangerous task of dragging for mines and securing accurate soundings.

Inasmuch as the shores of Ta-yao-kow Bay

are only a short distance from the enemy's strong position upon Nanshan hills, the attempt to create a landing base there met with a good deal of opposition. There were many outposts along the shore, and some semi-permanent infantry positions farther inland, but the enemy did not appear to have any big guns close enough to the shores to use them. Some bodies of infantry and cavalry which appeared were dispersed by the fire from the ships, and the work of sounding and dragging for mines was kept up all day with considerable success. Late in the afternoon, however, a torpedo boat was struck by a mine, and sank with some fourteen of her crew. The gunboat *Miyako* entered Shan Bay, an indenture immediately north of Ta-yao-kow, and destroyed a watch-tower of the enemy situated upon a hill to the north-west of Robinson promontory. On the morning of the 14th the work was resumed. The torpedo flotillas with the smaller gunboats were sent into the bay under cover of a bombardment from the squadron outside. The enemy had in the meantime placed a battery of field guns upon the slopes of Ta-ku-shan, or Taku-hill, near the entrance to the bay, and close to the battery position trenches had been constructed to shelter about a company of infantry. While the clearing flotilla were engaged in removing mines the enemy kept up a galling fire all day. During the afternoon the gunboat *Miyako* struck a mine and went to the bottom with most of her crew. Upon the 16th and subsequent days the work of clearing the bay of mines was proceeded with in spite of the determined defence of the enemy. On the 20th, the third squadron of the fleet, escorting a number

of transports having on board the sixth division of infantry, arrived in Ta-yao-kow Bay. Probably because the Russians had been compelled to concentrate their forces in the meantime against the advance of the Second Army from the north, a naval detachment succeeded in effecting a landing unopposed about eight o'clock in the morning, and occupied an eminence commanding the approaches to the landing-place. The work of disembarking the troops was completed in a very short time. Leaving a small force to guard the landing place, the division was marched northward, and so disposed as to cover an advance of an enemy from the north against the rear of the Second Army, which was now closing in about Nanshan and Kinchow. A few days after the landing of the sixth division another fleet of transports arrived, having on board the eleventh division of infantry, which was really the first division of the Third Army to land in the Liaotung peninsula. Though it arrived about the time Nanshan was fought, this division did not take part in the fight, but remained as reserves about the new base.

Meantime, without materially weakening his northern front, General Oku had gradually worked his line across the peninsula southward, sending out strong detachments from his main force to close in upon the enemy in front of Kinchow and the Nanshan position. Shortly after noon upon the 16th, the enemy was attacked at Shih-san-li-tai, a town just west of the railway line and about a mile and a half north of Kinchow, and forced to retire. About three o'clock the same afternoon the town of Chin-li-chwang, about one

mile and a half north-east of Kinchow, was occupied; and later the same evening the hills to the north of the town of Chin-cha-tien, about a mile and a half east of Kinchow, were in possession of the Japanese army. On the 20th a considerable body of the enemy, in a position north of Siao-chin-shan, was defeated, and communication established with the eleventh division at the new landing place on the north shores of Ta-yao-kow Bay. On the following day a closing-in process was commenced against the Russian main position in the town of Kinchow and upon the heights of Nanshan under a heavy bombardment from his big guns.

Just about this time a series of disasters happened to the navy in front of Port Arthur. About half-past one on the morning of the 15th, while the third squadron was returning from blockading the harbour, it encountered a heavy fog about ten miles off the Shantung promontory. The cruiser *Kasuga* collided with the cruiser *Yoshino*, striking her on the port side towards the stern. The *Yoshino* began to fill rapidly, and sank with all her crew, except some ninety officers and men. While keeping watch outside the harbour the same day, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the battleship *Hatsuse* struck one of the enemy's mines, and had her steering-gear badly injured. She at once telegraphed for a tug-boat, but inside half an hour she struck another mine, and went down with about one-half her officers and crew. While the *Hatsuse* was sinking, some sixteen Russian torpedo craft emerged from the harbour and attacked the ships of the squadron which were engaged in rescuing the survivors of the disaster. The fortunate arrival of another de-

tachment of the fleet put the Russian torpedo-craft flotillas to flight, and the work of rescue was completed. A few days after a third catastrophe happened, though it was not known to the public for many months afterwards. The battleship *Yashima*, while engaged with the blocking patrol outside the harbour, struck one of the enemy's floating mines, and before assistance could be rendered went to the bottom. There were, no doubt, good reasons why the Japanese military and naval authorities kept the loss of this second of their first-class battleships from the public. Her loss at that particular time was a great misfortune. Though the Russians knew that two large Japanese warships had gone down about the same time, they evidently did not know that two of the largest battleships had been lost.

Reports were received about this time, to the effect that the enemy in the north was preparing a large force with the intention of coming south and attacking the Japanese army in the rear. General Oku was in a dangerous position. The Russians had developed a strength in the Nanshan position which required his whole army to successfully meet. It is true that he had another division of infantry in reserve with which he had partially covered his rear, and a second division, the eleventh, was expected to land at his new base in Kerr Bay within a few days; but even with this force he was in great danger of being caught between the attacks from front and rear. A squadron of the fleet, despite the disasters which occurred at the time, proceeded northward from the vicinity of Port Arthur through the Gulf of Pe-chi-li, to the west coast of the peninsula off

Kai-ping, and bombarded the railway line, with the intention of smashing some of the bridges at that point, and thus delaying the movement of any considerable bodies of the enemy southward. Having inflicted some damage, the squadron again sailed southward, and upon the 17th, after carefully dragging for mines, two of the gunboats entered Kinchow Bay close to the Nanshan position and bombarded it for some time. The object of this move was to discover if Kinchow Bay could be utilized by the fleet, in co-operation with the army when the attack upon Nanshan took place, by bombarding from the sea.

About one o'clock on the morning of the 20th a gunboat detachment and several torpedo-craft flotillas succeeded, under a heavy fire from the Russian guns, in laying a series of mines in front of the harbour at Port Arthur. Though the bombardment was severe little damage was done to the mine-laying vessels.

The army under command of General Oku spent from the 20th to the 25th in reconnoitring the enemy's position at Kinchow and Nanshan, and in making ready to assault both positions. With the fourth, or Osaka, division on the right flank, the first, or Tokyo, division in the centre, and the third, or Nagoya, division on the left flank, the army was extended along the range of hills to the east of Kinchow and the north-east of Nanshan. The walled Chinese town of Kinchow is situated close to the west coast in Kinchow Bay, and at the throat of the isthmus of the same name. This isthmus is the narrowest point in the whole of the Liaotung peninsula, and is not more than two miles wide from the shores of Kin-

chow Bay on the west coast to the shores of a small indenture of Ta-lien-wan on the east coast directly in front of the Nanshan position. The railway from Harbin and Mukden passes across the isthmus close to the town and to the east of the Nanshan position. The walls which enclose Kinchow are strongly built of brick, and are six hundred yards wide by seven hundred and sixty yards long. The town is situated upon a level plain, and is of little use for the defence of the isthmus as it is commanded by hills to north and east, and if attacked upon three sides the force holding it would have no safe line of retreat. The Nanshan hills are situated about two miles to the south of Kinchow, and almost completely block the entire width of the isthmus at that point, the only gap being that through which the railway line runs to the east of the hills. The great weakness of the position is, that it can be commanded from the sea in Kinchow Bay upon the west coast and the small indenture of Ta-lien-wan upon the east coast by shallow-draft warships. In the rear of the Nanshan hills, and to the west, is another low ridge of hills, known as the Nan-kwan-ling heights, which form a fairly good secondary position, but they too can be commanded by gunboat fire from Kinchow Bay. Though they held the town of Kinchow with a small force of infantry and some field guns, the Russians had made the heights of Nanshan their main position. These heights comprise four or five different peaks connected by very high ground. The conformation of the hills is such that the position presents a double front to an enemy endeavouring to assault it. The north front commands the level plain which extends

from the foot of the hills to the confines of Kinchow, a distance of about two miles. The east front commands any advance from the hills to the east and north-east of the position, while the fact that the peaks of the Nanshan ridge extend well to the rear on the east side makes any outflanking movement through the gap between the foot of the hills and the shores of the small indenture of Ta-lien-wan impossible. The front of the Russian position extended, in a series of well-constructed infantry trenches, from the shores of the indenture of Ta-lien-wan upon the east coast across the gap between it and the slopes of the hills, and from there almost due west along the foot of the hill-slopes almost to the shores of Kinchow Bay on the west coast. In front of this first row of infantry trenches, extending almost east and west along the foot of the hills and across the gap between the hills and the shore-line on the right flank, there were many lines of wire entanglements and numerous mines. Three more lines of infantry trenches ran around the slopes of the hills upon the north and east fronts. All these trench-lines were well constructed and provided with embrasures for machine guns and automatic quick-firers, with strong bomb-proofs at intervals for the protection of the infantry from the effects of big-gun fire. Upon the crests of the hills were the battery positions. These positions might be termed semi-permanent works, so well and strongly were they constructed. There were three main battery positions facing the north and north-east, while in rear, upon higher peaks, were two more gun positions which could be used against troops advancing upon either the north or east fronts. The entire position was equipped with

electric searchlights supplied with power from a small plant in rear of the position. There was one weak point, and that was upon the west flank. Between the shores of Kinchow Bay and the slopes of the first peak of the Nanshan hills the distance is about two thousand yards. For some wholly unexplained reason the Russians failed to run their trench-lines the whole distance to the shore-line. It is true that the gap left was commanded to a certain extent by a short trench-line upon the slopes of the Nan-kwan-ling hills in rear and farther to the west. It must have been apparent to the Russians that the Japanese would receive assistance from their gunboats in Kinchow Bay long before the attack upon the position was made, and in that case their failure to strengthen the west flank of their otherwise impregnable position was an inexcusable mistake, and one which cost them more than one would care to estimate. The approaches to this enormously strong position were about two miles over a fairly level plain with little cover for advancing troops. The slopes of the hills were gentle, with no dead ground to afford cover for assaulters.

It was originally intended that the attack should be commenced simultaneously against Kinchow and the Nanshan position early upon the morning of the 25th, with the co-operation of four gunboats from the navy in Kinchow Bay. The entire divisional artillery opened fire upon the Russian positions early that morning, and was answered by the heavy guns on the Nanshan hills and a few field guns in Kinchow. The guns in Kinchow were quickly silenced, but the superiority in range and calibre of the

guns upon the Nanshan position was soon demonstrated. Owing to a heavy sea which was running in Kinchow Bay the gunboats were unable to approach the shore, so the infantry attack had to be postponed. About midnight the assault was to begin, by the fourth division upon the east flank attacking the Russians in the town of Kinchow. Again there was a delay, for at that time a heavy thunderstorm came on and several of the Japanese positions were struck by lightning, which, however, did no damage. About two o'clock in the morning the thunderstorm passed, but the night remained exceedingly dark. The right wing finally began its advance against Kinchow, but the extreme darkness and the condition of the ground offered serious obstacles, so that it was not until half-past five o'clock in the morning that the Osaka division were able to dislodge the enemy in the town. Driven from their trenches, the Russian force, numbering about six hundred, retreated to the westward. The pursuing Japanese succeeded in cutting off their retreat to the main Russian position at Nanshan. Slowly they were pushed back until driven into the sea, where the whole body was slaughtered with the exception of a dozen who were taken prisoners. Those who saw the incident say that the water was coloured with blood. Morning of the 26th broke with a heavy fog, which delayed the beginning of the artillery fire upon both sides. About six o'clock the artillery duel began, and at the same time the four Japanese gunboats arrived off the shore in Kinchow Bay and assisted in the bombardment. The Russians upon the Nanshan position replied with all their batteries, and for three hours a fierce artillery duel was kept up.

This was the beginning of one of the hardest fought and most dramatic battles of the whole war. Only an eye-witness could even attempt to adequately describe it, and unfortunately there was not a disinterested spectator present, for at the time Nanshan was fought, and until the Third Japanese Army had succeeded in investing Port Arthur, neither newspaper correspondents nor military attachés were permitted to go with the armies operating in the Liaotung peninsula. There are many battlefields which give the visitor little chance of judging from the field itself what has actually taken place. A widely extended or irregular front, involving complicated lines of defence or an intricate scheme of attack, makes it impossible for the investigator to ascertain what has taken place with any appreciable degree of accuracy. No one who has gone over the battlefield at Nanshan can fail to be struck with the completeness and accuracy of the picture which an examination of the field forces upon one. From the centre of the captured Russian position on the top of the Nanshan hills there spreads out before the observer a wonderfully vivid panorama of the hard-fought battle which took place there. The vividness of the picture is due to the fact that, from a single point, not only is every part of the scene of the fight visible, but the Japanese position before, and the ground gone over during, the attack are in plain and easy view.

The infantry advance was begun about nine o'clock under cover of a heavy bombardment from the entire Japanese artillery, but it was made slowly and at considerable cost in life over the bullet-swept plain, which because of its narrowness must

have been simply alive with troops. When one realizes that fully forty thousand soldiers attacked over a level plain scarce two miles wide from sea to sea towards an objective at the narrowest point, while Russian artillery, machine guns, quick-firers and rifles poured a deadly hail into the approaching lines from a height which made it impossible for even a tenth part to find cover, one is compelled to wonder how it was that the whole force was not annihilated. Despite the heavy losses, the whole army pushed forward under a deadly fire until it approached to within from three to five hundred yards of the first trench-line. About ten o'clock a Russian gunboat put in an appearance at the entrance to the small indenture of Ta-lien-wan, and for several hours kept up a galling fire upon the Nagoya division from the rear. The left flank also suffered severely from the fire of the enemy's guns from batteries at the extreme end of the east front of his position. This fire it was impossible to silence, owing to the great distance at which the batteries were from the Japanese artillery positions. While the left flank was being deluged with artillery fire from two unassailable positions, the enemy tried to land a naval detachment under cover of the fire from the gunboat in the indenture of Ta-lien-wan, so as to attack the Japanese left flank in the rear, but the attempt was not successful. About two o'clock the trying position of the third division was relieved by the Russian gunboat being compelled to retire on account of a fire directed at it from Japanese gunboats. During the afternoon the first division in the centre made two desperate attempts to get through the wire entanglements

and charge the first line of trenches at the foot of the hill-slopes. Each attempt was met with an awful rifle and machine-gun fire, before which men went down in hundreds. The last assault of the two was the more desperate. What those charges were one can only imagine. They must have been magnificent, but they were not war. Thus foiled, when they ought to have been broken, the men of the Tokyo division stubbornly refused to give up the ground they had won, and until the end poured a heavy rifle fire into the enemy's trench-line from a distance of not more than fifty or sixty yards.

Meantime the Nagoya division, having broken through the Russian trench-line between the east slopes of Nanshan and the small indenture of Ta-lien-wan, extended their front almost north and south, facing the right flank front of the Russian position, and tried to assault the first line of trenches at the foot of the slopes. They were severely repulsed, but managed to maintain a very advanced position despite the enemy's fire.

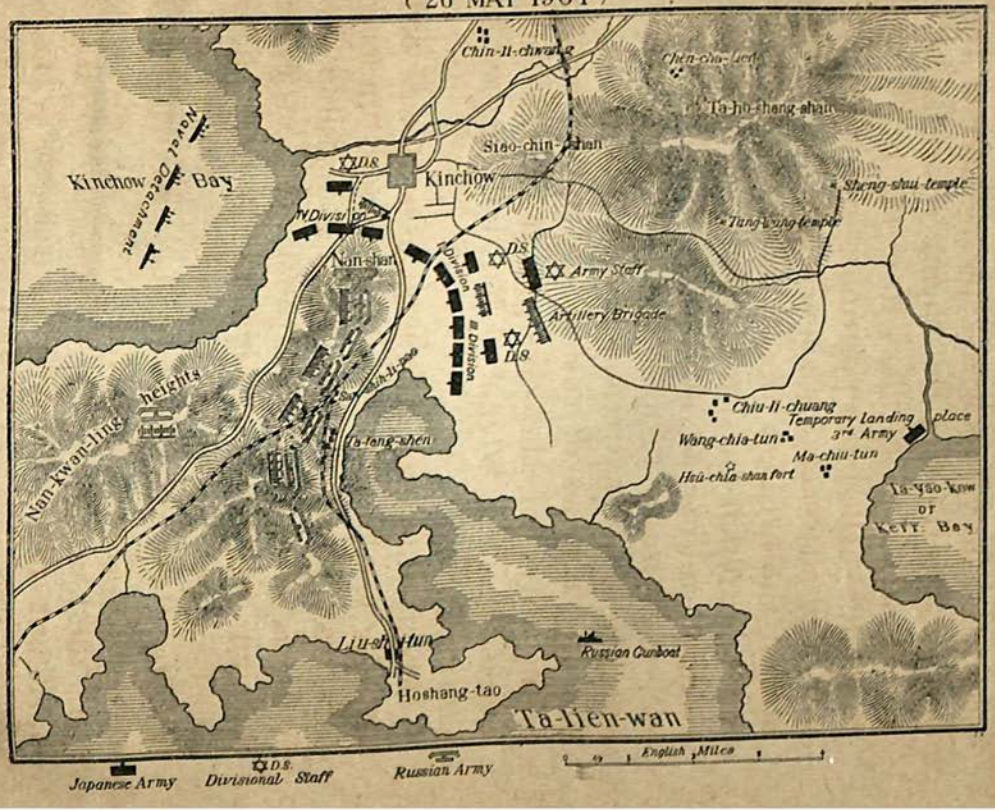
Upon the right flank of the Japanese attacking line was the fourth, or Osaka division. Their advance along the shores of Kinchow Bay was well covered by a heavy artillery fire from the four gunboats in the bay. Had it not been for the presence and splendid work done by these gunboats, in silencing the heavy gunfire from the semi-permanent forts upon the left flank of the Russian position, and keeping down the rifle fire as well, it would be impossible to conceive of the Osaka division, or any other troops, advancing over the level ground close to the beach, which afforded not a vestige of cover, under the fire

that might have been poured in upon them for a distance of nearly two miles. But here was the one vulnerable spot in the otherwise impregnable position at Nanshan, and the Japanese were evidently not slow in taking advantage of it. A heavy artillery fire was kept up against the main battery positions of the enemy upon his left flank by the divisional artillery from the front, while the gunboats shelled the positions practically from the rear, and succeeded in silencing them. The attention of the artillery was then directed against the enemy's trench-lines, and about five o'clock in the evening, taking advantage of the heavy artillery fire, the Osaka men waded through the shallow water upon the extreme left of the enemy's position, and, by a series of rushes, put several companies under cover of the escarpment of the hill upon which the most advanced Russian battery had its position.

About this time a general assault was ordered, and the Osaka men, working around under cover part way up the slope, reached possible striking distance of the main battery position upon the Russian left flank. Five hundred yards of a bullet-swept glacis lay between them and the position they had been ordered to take. It must have been a mad, awful rush, in which brave men died in hundreds. The glacis crossed, a short but fierce bayonet charge gave them the coveted position. The rest of the Japanese force did not wait to make the general charge until the event just described had happened. Again the men from Tokyo essayed to take the enemy's centre by a series of rushes. They were advancing under an awful fire from the first captured trench-line to

SKETCH MAP OF THE BATTLE OF NAN-SHAN

(26 MAY 1904)



the second, when shouts of " Banzai ! " ringing loud above the roar of the guns and the incessant rattle of rifles, directed their attention to the flag of the Rising Sun floating proudly over the captured gun position upon the left flank. The effect was instantaneous. The troops did the apparently impossible with tremendous spirit. In a few minutes they had reached the crests of the slope. The left and centre positions were now won, but the Nagoya division was having a hard time of it upon the right, where the enemy fought with the courage of despair. Their own task accomplished, the Tokyo men gallantly went to the assistance of their comrades upon the right, attacking the enemy upon his flank and rear. The end came soon, for the Russians broke and fled, leaving practically everything behind them. Nanshan was won, and with it the great Russian commercial town of Dalny with its splendid harbour. The gateway to Port Arthur was now open. General Oku had completed the first part of the difficult task given him. In the fight the victorious army lost four thousand two hundred killed and wounded, while the Russians lost about a thousand killed. The number of wounded was, however, very small. The spoils of war consisted of some eighty guns of various calibre, a large quantity of big-gun ammunition, hundreds of rifles, and great quantities of stores and other munitions of war. In addition there was an electric plant and a number of electric searchlights with which the position was equipped. The Russians claim that there were only about four thousand troops defending the Nanshan position when it was taken. Plenty of troops were avail-

able, but it was not thought that more would be required.

While walking over the position months after the battle with a Japanese officer who had been present, he volunteered the astonishing information that out of some eight hundred men of the Fifth Regiment of East Siberian Sharpshooters who occupied the first line of trenches, nearly five hundred were killed, three hundred wounded, while only twenty-six escaped with the retreating force. This great disproportion between killed and wounded, he explained, was due to the fact that there were no connecting trenches from the front trench-line to the rear. Consequently all day long wounded men lay in their trenches, and were killed by the heavy fire from the Japanese artillery. The Russians claim that many of the wounded were killed in the final charge. However this may be, the Russian belief that such was the case started the bitter feeling of antagonism which was such an awful feature of the fighting for months afterwards during the advance towards, and the siege of, Port Arthur.

CHAPTER V

The retreat of the Russians from Nanshan—The occupation of Liu-chi-tun and Dalny—General Oku's march northward and how the Russians missed their opportunity of retrieving Nanshan—How the Third Japanese Army was formed—The first stand of the Russians among the hills south-west of Dalny—Work of the navy clearing Ta-lien-wan of mines, and the establishment of a depot base for the Second Army at Liu-chi-tun and for the Third Army at Dalny—First advance of General Nogi's army towards Port Arthur—The desperate fighting at Kenzan.

THE retreat of the Russians from the Nanshan position upon the night of the 26th of May was carried out in fairly good order. The force occupying the left flank of the position retired to the Nan-kwan-ling heights, while those occupying the centre and right flank withdrew to the railway station at San-shi-li-pao, about a mile in rear of the position to the southward, after blowing up their magazine near the Ta-feng-shen battery position. At San-shi-li-pao there were a few heavy guns posted, with which the retreating army kept up a heavy bombardment of the position they had just lost in order to prevent pursuit. By midnight the major portion of the force had retreated southward by train in the direction of Port Arthur, after having set fire to the railway station at San-shi-li-pao. The victorious army bivouacked for the night upon the battlefield and in the adjacent Chinese villages. The following morning Major-General Nakamura, with a portion of the second brigade of the first division, attacked

the enemy occupying the Nan-kwan-ling heights, and, with the assistance of the gunboats in Kinchow Bay, forced them to retire after a feeble resistance. Later the same day a portion of the brigade occupied the port of Liu-chi-tun, directly south, about twelve miles from Nanshan and close to the entrance to Ta-lien-wan. The place was taken after a feeble resistance, and with it four guns, a quantity of ammunition, and a number of railway trucks. A branch line of the Trans-Siberian Railway runs from the main line at San-shi-li-pao station to Liu-chi-tun, so that, in common with Dalny and Port Arthur, the place is one of the termini of the great Russian railway system in Manchuria. The following day a small detachment of troops was sent around Ta-lien-wan to occupy Dalny, which it did after overcoming a small body of the enemy.

In the meantime General Oku and his victorious army were given little time in which to rest upon their laurels. News from the north was exceedingly disquieting. General Kuropatkin had, under instructions from St. Petersburg, and, it is said, much against his own judgment, despatched General Stackleberg with an army corps southward a few days before Nanshan was fought. It is true that the sixth division of infantry had been sent northward to form a screen across the peninsula in order to prevent the army being surprised at Nanshan, but time meant everything now. The farther south Stackleberg and his army were able to get, the more likelihood there was of securing co-operation from the Russian force to the south of Nanshan, and the greater difficulty there would be in driving them back to the north

through a country well adapted for defence. Without a moment's loss of time General Oku detached the first division of infantry from his army to close in upon the retreating Russian force south of Nanshan, and with the third and fourth divisions marched northward, completing the strength of his army by adding to it the sixth division, which was already acting as his advance guard in the march to meet Stackleberg. He moved none too soon, for his advance came into contact with the Russians in the neighbourhood of Li-chia-tien, about twenty-two miles north of Pu-lan-tien, only three days after Nanshan was fought and won. It is doubtful whether he would have been able to move soon enough had Stackleberg pushed on with the force at his command, instead of waiting at Te-li-ssu for reinforcements to come to him from the north. The details of how General Oku met the Russians at Te-li-ssu and inflicted a crushing defeat upon them, following it up with another at Kai-ping, is only a part of this story in as much as it shows how Russian tardiness made it impossible for their armies in the north to co-operate with the forces in the south, and thus menace the Japanese advance towards Port Arthur.

The defeat of the Russians at Nanshan seems to have completely taken the heart out of them. From the number of troops which surrendered when Port Arthur fell, it is evident that an army of fully fifty thousand might have been massed, within twenty-four hours after Nanshan was lost, and before the Japanese advance towards the fortress city. The story told by the Russian officers, after the fall of the place, in this connection, is

to the effect that they knew that five divisions of the Japanese had been landed before the battle of Nanshan. They claimed ignorance of the fact that General Oku had taken three of those divisions north with him immediately after the fight. They were aware that a Russian army was on its way south, and fully expected that Nanshan would be followed in a few days by a crushing defeat of the victorious army through attacks delivered simultaneously in front and rear. Whether it was this belief that lost them a golden opportunity of retrieving their defeat at Nanshan or not, it is certain that one was lost.

About the time that General Oku, with the newly-constituted Second Army, marched northward to meet the force under General Stackleberg, General Nogi with his staff arrived at the new landing place established in Kerr Bay, and at once took command of the Third Army, which then consisted of the first and eleventh divisions of infantry with full divisional artillery. With these two divisions he at once proceeded to close in upon the positions taken up by the Russians who had retired after the battle of Nanshan. Upon the 1st of June he made his headquarters at the small Chinese village of Pah-pao-tzu-ai, about seven miles south-west of Dalny, upon the branch line which runs from the main line to Port Arthur at Nan-kwan-ling Junction to the city of Dalny. The Russians were found to have occupied a series of ridges extending in a more or less irregular line from An-she-shan, close to the west coast, to a point close to Shao-ping-tao, upon the east coast of the peninsula. This line had a front of about twelve miles. From the

point where the Russian right rested upon the east coast near Shao-ping-tao the line extended in an irregular north-westerly direction to a high hill, known to the natives as Fing-shan, but renamed by the Japanese, Kenzan, which formed the centre of their position. This hill is about twelve hundred feet in height. From Kenzan the line followed another irregular series of ridges which end in a high hill known as An-she-shan, about three miles from the west coast. From this hill to the coast the line extended along a high level plateau over which runs the railway line to Port Arthur. Almost directly in front of Kenzan, which formed the centre of the Russian position, and about a quarter of a mile distant, the enemy also had an advance post upon a hill called by the Japanese Wai-to-shan, which is about eleven hundred feet in height. The reason for holding this advanced post was that Kenzan, despite its great height, was partly isolated from the ridges upon the right and left, and might be approached by an enemy from all sides. The position was one of considerable natural strength, though the great height of the ridges and hills, especially upon the centre and right flank, resulted in much dead ground at more or less vital points of defence. The right flank of the position near Shao-ping-tao was about twelve miles north-east, and the left flank near An-she-shan about eighteen miles almost due west of Port Arthur.[1]

The two divisions of infantry with full divisional artillery, which constituted the force of the newly-constituted Third Japanese Army, took up a position directly in front of that occupied

[1] See Sketch Map A, at the end of the volume.

by the Russians. The line extended from the east coast near Tai-tzu-shan over the crests of a lower and more irregular series of ridges which end in a hill called An-tzu-shan, which is about half a mile from the west coast of the peninsula. The position was strong only in the fact that the irregularity of the Russian line and the broken ground between the two positions afforded an easy approach for attack. The first division was extended from the west coast to the centre of the position, and the eleventh division from the east coast to the centre. With only an occasional skirmish to relieve the monotony of things, the opposing armies occupied these positions until the 26th of June, during which time the Second Army had won the battle of Te-li-ssu, and was making co-operation between the Russian armies of the north and south impossible by forcing them back to Kai-ping.

Having succeeded in establishing a firm foothold in the Liaotung peninsula, the Japanese were fully alive to the enormous advantages Ta-lien-wan offered for the establishment of base depots for their two armies. The bay is a splendid and adequate harbour for transports and supply ships. It was close to the naval base at the Elliott Islands, so that danger to the transport service from Russian warships could easily be obviated by the transports taking an easterly route from Japan, and sailing up close to the west coast of Korea under shelter of the many islands which lie off that shore, to the rendezvous of the fleet, whence they could easily be convoyed with little trouble or inconvenience to their destination in Ta-lien-wan. In addition, the safety of the

harbour could always be ensured by making it the rendezvous of a certain number of the gunboats and torpedo craft engaged in the operations before Port Arthur. The port of Liu-chi-tun, on the northern shores of the bay, quite close to its entrance, is one of the termini of the Trans-Siberian railway system; while Dalny is also a terminal point, with almost direct rail communication with Port Arthur. But the great difficulty was that Ta-lien-wan was plentifully planted with the enemy's mines. The removal of these mines and the buoying out of a safe channel to Liu-chi-tun and Dalny was the difficult and dangerous task which the mine-removing vessels of the Japanese Navy undertook upon the 3rd of June. In a week's time the transports and supply vessels for both the Second and Third Armies were able to make Liu-chi-tun their destination. As long as General Oku with the Second Army remained close to this new base, there was not much difficulty experienced in forwarding reinforcements and supplies to him by supply columns; but it was not part of the pre-arranged plans that the Second Army should remain long within easy distance of its base. The utilization of the Russian railway system for forwarding men and supplies to both armies had its obvious advantages, but difficulties were nevertheless encountered. The Russians had taken care that no useful rolling stock should fall into the hands of the Japanese. The gauge of the railway was considerably wider than that of the Government or any of the privately owned railway systems in Japan. Large numbers of Japanese workmen were enrolled in what is called the train corps of the army and sent

to the front. Locomotives and trucks from the Imperial Government railways were also sent by ship to Liu-chi-tun. Immediately, the train corps set to work repairing breaks in the railway to the northward from Liu-chi-tun towards the rear of General Oku's army. The difficulty of the difference in gauge was quickly overcome. A single rail was lifted and moved in, so that the wide gauge track was made to fit the imported rolling stock in a very short time. It was only a few weeks after the battle of Te-li-ssu, when not only had a permanent base been created at Liu-chi-tun, but rail communication had been established to the rear of the Second Army upon its victorious advance northward towards Liao-yang. The progress of the Third Army towards Port Arthur being slower, its supplies were sent by supply column until such time as the navy had completed its task of removing the mine fields from the inner reaches of the bay, so that transports might have a safe channel through which they could approach the docks and piers in Dalny harbour. This work was completed about the end of July, when it was duly made the depot base of the Third Army. In all this dangerous work of dragging Ta-lien-wan for mines the navy suffered no losses in ships, though over a thousand mines were removed and destroyed. So thoroughly had the Russians done their work, that some forty mines were removed from in front of the largest dock in the harbour.

Meantime the navy before Port Arthur was carefully but steadily carrying on its work. About one o'clock on the morning of May 30th,

in the face of a heavy fire from the shore batteries, four gunboats with two torpedo-destroyer flotillas made a reconnaissance in force towards the harbour entrance, and succeeded in adding considerably to the mine field. During the operation a gunboat was struck by a shell and considerably damaged. One of the results of the reconnaissance was that it was found that the enemy had placed a new electric searchlight upon the crest of Lao-tieh-shan. The following day the blockading squadron reported that a signal station, with poles for wireless telegraphy, was being erected upon the highest peak of the Lao-tieh-shan ridge. While dragging for mines off the entrance to the harbour on the evening of the 4th of June, one of the Russian gunboats struck a mine and went to the bottom in a few minutes. A Japanese torpedo flotilla, which was doing blockading duty in the neighbourhood, drew so close to the scene of the disaster that it was fired upon by the land batteries, whereupon it steamed quickly southward. Seeing this, two more of the Russian gunboats started in pursuit and entered a new mine field laid a short time previously by the Japanese. Both vessels struck mines, and one after the other was sunk, apparently with all their crews. While carrying on a reconnaissance in front of the harbour on the night of the 5th, a Japanese gunboat was struck by no less than eight shells, and more or less seriously damaged. Upon the 7th and 8th of June the sixth fighting squadron proceeded north in the Gulf of Pe-chi-li to the coast of Kai-ping, and carried on a heavy bombardment of the Russian forces at that place. Considerable damage was also done to the railway

bridges in the vicinity, in order to impede the despatch of Russian troops southward to reinforce the army at Te-li-ssu.

The Third Japanese Army had been almost a month in front of the Russian position among the hills to the south-west of Dalny, when, on the 26th of June, General Nogi decided to make his first offensive move. The principal reason for this being done before the third division of his army had been landed, was that from the top of Kenzan the Russians were able not only to observe all that was going on in the rear of the Japanese lines, but also see what was taking place in Dalny and Ta-lien-wan. The Japanese realised that from the top of Kenzan the country southward to the fortress belt which encircles Port Arthur was visible.

The attack was begun before daylight by the eleventh division advancing against the right flank of the Russian position. The outposts were easily driven in. At nine o'clock the heights of Wai-to-shan with surrounding hills were captured. The real centre of the Russian position upon the heights of Kenzan, however, still held out. About noon a regiment of infantry supported by a battery of mountain guns advanced to attack Kenzan. At the same time three cruisers and four gunboats from Port Arthur appeared off the shore near Shao-ping-tao, and began to bombard the left flank of the Japanese advance. Shortly after, a squadron of the Japanese fleet arrived upon the scene and immediately engaged the Russian warships. There was a short sea fight, which resulted in the Russian vessels returning to

[1] See Sketch Map A, at the end of the volume.

Port Arthur. Under a withering fire the Japanese infantry advanced up the steep, pathless slopes of Kenzan. Their progress was slow and the casualties sustained were considerable. About three o'clock in the afternoon the enemy exploded two electric contact mines upon the slope of the hill directly in the line of the Japanese advance, but they blew up at the wrong moment and did little damage. Isolated from the main Russian line, which had been gradually pushed back, the force upon the top of Kenzan fought with the energy of despair. Four automatic quick-firers and a couple of machine guns were trained upon the advancing Japanese, but they were quickly put out of action by the fire of the mountain guns placed upon the crest of Wai-to-shan, which had been previously captured. By five o'clock in the evening the assaulters had reached charging distance of the top of the hill. A short ten minutes' desperate work with the bayonet and they were in possession of the entire crest, the enemy having broken and fled after a short but stubborn resistance. The Russian force which defended the position consisted of one battalion of infantry with four automatic quick-firers and some machine guns. The victors captured two of the quick-firers. The fight for the possession of Kenzan was the hardest of the day. Between it and the east coast, near Shao-ping-tao, the other regiments of the eleventh division succeeded with comparative ease in pushing back the Russian line, owing to the fact that the amount of broken ground in front afforded ideal battery positions and enabled the attacking infantry to get within a short distance almost completely under cover. A heavy bom-

bardment from a detachment of the fleet off the shore near Shao-ping-tao considerably assisted the divisional artillery in making the enemy's positions nearest the coast-line untenable. To the west of the centre beyond Kenzan, the left wing of the first division had to do some desperate fighting before the Russians were forced to retire from the heights west of the town of Pantao. Upon the extreme west flank their position remained unaltered, but the Japanese were able to close in over some four miles of level plain which lay between their previous line and that occupied by the Russians. This ground had before the attack been commanded from a ridge of heights to the east, from which the enemy was driven by the successful advance of the left wing of the first division. Before dark on the night of the 26th, the Russians had evacuated their entire line from the east coast near Shao-ping-tao to the An-she-shan hills, a few miles from the west coast near Swang-tai-kow. Up to this time the splendid harbour at Shao-ping-tao, about ten miles west along the east coast from the entrance to the harbour at Port Arthur, had been used by the Russian warships as a temporary base. The capture of Shao-ping-tao enabled the Japanese Navy to use this harbour for similar purposes from this time on until the end of the siege.

Subsequent events proved that the Russians never intended that Kenzan should so easily fall into the hands of the Japanese. It is said that General Stoessel was furious when he heard of what had happened, and gave orders that the hill should be recaptured at any cost. In pursuance

of this order a week later, upon the 3rd of July, the Russians began a bombardment before dawn of the whole left flank of the Japanese position. A fierce artillery duel, lasting several hours, followed, after which a Russian division made an attack with military bands playing and banners floating in the breeze. With great spirit and determination they advanced to within four hundred yards of the Japanese lines. The attack lasted several hours, but, after a desperate engagement along the whole front, they were compelled to retire. The same night the Russians again attacked Kenzan from all sides. This time there were no bands. The advance was made in perfect silence. One company with wonderful cleverness succeeded in climbing the steep sides of the mountain so quietly that their presence was not discovered until they had almost reached the top. For a few minutes this attack in the darkness looked as if it was bound to be successful, so resolutely did the assaulters charge time after time. The position was saved only because the Japanese had, with infinite labour, blasted the top of the mountain and constructed around the crest a breastwork of dry stone masonry. It was this wholly unexpected impediment encountered in the darkness which effectually stopped the assaulters, but only after several desperate bayonet encounters. The Russians fought like demons to secure a foothold inside the position, but were finally repulsed and forced to retire down the slopes they had so skilfully scaled. The following day they renewed the attack upon the Japanese left flank with the object of forcing a retirement of their line, in

order to envelop Kenzan, which in all these engagements seemed to be the objective no matter where the attack developed. This attempt also ended in failure after some bitter fighting lasting most of the day. Upon the 5th there was little fighting, but that night another unsuccessful attempt was made by two companies to surprise the Japanese garrison upon the crests of Kenzan. These futile attempts to retake the hill, and the flank fighting which the various attempts necessitated, cost the Russians about one thousand killed and wounded. This was a high price to pay at this time for an observation point, no matter how good. If the real object of the Russians was to break through the Japanese lines and endeavour to co-operate with General Stackleberg, whom they no doubt thought was in the immediate vicinity of the Japanese rear, it was certainly a most ineffectual effort for a force as strong as that possessed by them.

After the last attempt to retake Kenzan, on the night of the 5th of July, there was practically no more fighting between the two forces, except occasional skirmishes, until the Japanese again moved forward upon the 26th of the month. For weeks prior to their retirement from their first line, the Russians had been busily engaged preparing fortifications upon the series of positions they took up after being driven back. This line extended from the Chinese town of Swang-tai-kow, near the west coast of the peninsula, over the high land to the east, and thence along a very high rocky ridge, called the O-ji-kai-shan, to An-tzu-ling. From there the line ran to Ka-

bu-to-shan and Lao-tzuo-shan, two hills close to the east coast. While they occupied these positions the Russians were incessantly engaged in constructing semi-permanent defences, endless lines of trenches, and strong battery positions with well-made roads leading to them. The positions were exceptionally strong, but again the great height of the hills on the centre and right flank resulted in too much dead ground. This fact made it necessary for the battery locations and infantry trenches to be placed directly upon the crests of the ridges, where they were of course a splendid target for the Japanese artillery. Just prior to the last fight several batteries of naval guns were landed at Liu-chi-tun, and their presence had a great deal to do with the successful manner in which the Russian first line was captured.

During the latter part of June and the early part of July the work of the Japanese fleet in front of Port Arthur produced little of startling interest. The harbour entrance was more closely watched than previously, and the Russian warships seldom ventured beyond cover of the fortress batteries. Upon the 24th of July, however, two Japanese gunboats and a torpedo-craft flotilla attacked a number of the enemy's torpedo destroyers which were lying concealed in the eastern harbour at Shao-ping-tao. Two of the destroyers were sunk and two more managed to make their escape. This was the last time the Russian torpedo craft ventured into the Shao-ping-tao harbour.

CHAPTER VI

The strength of the Third Army completed by the arrival of the ninth division and two independent infantry brigades—The second move of General Nogi's army towards Port Arthur—Three days' desperate fighting which ended in the capture of the entire Russian position—Third line of defence taken up by the Russians—Surprise attack of July 30th, by which the Russians were driven within the permanent fortifications about Port Arthur—Sketch of the naval operations—The sortie of the Russian fleet on August 10th and the fight which followed.

THE difficulties which faced the Third Japanese Army in making its second move in the advance towards Port Arthur were much greater than those encountered in making the first. All the time the Russians were holding their first line of positions across the peninsula they were busily engaged fortifying the second. The result was that when they retired from the first line they were able to at once occupy a series of positions which had in a large measure been prepared for them. During the weeks in July when the two armies faced each other without doing any serious fighting the Russians worked practically night and day completing the defences of their position, and making ready to resist the assault which they, of course, knew was coming. It soon became evident to the Japanese that not only were the Russians strongly entrenched in an almost unassailable position, but had added largely to the number of heavy long-range guns, and considerably reinforced their infantry. Under these circumstances, General Nogi decided

to wait until his army was brought up to its full fighting strength by reinforcements from Japan before again taking the offensive and attacking the strongly defended and well-entrenched positions of the enemy.

During the second week in July a flotilla of transports arrived in Dalny, having on board the ninth division of infantry with divisional artillery, an artillery brigade of seventy-two field guns, and two independent infantry brigades of second reserves. These reinforcements were at once marched to the positions occupied by the Third Army, which now included three divisions of the regular army with full divisional artillery, two independent brigades of infantry from the second reserves, and practically a brigade of artillery, besides three batteries of naval guns. The fighting strength of the army after the arrival of those reinforcements was between sixty and seventy thousand men. A rearrangement of the fighting line was made, in which the eleventh division retained its former position upon the left flank, but was given a less extensive front, the two independent brigades of infantry were placed in the centre, and the ninth and first divisions occupied the line from the centre to the right flank.

It is difficult to give any adequate idea of the relative positions occupied by the opposing armies and the nature of the country which separated them.[1] The peninsula at this point is literally a sea of jagged-crested, mountainous ridges, except close to the west coast, where there is a fairly level valley between the west extremity of the ridges and the coast. Through this valley the

[1] See Sketch Map A, at the end of the volume.

railway to Port Arthur runs. The Russian position followed the irregular lines of two high but broken ridges which extend almost from the east coast in a north-westerly direction to within a few miles of the west coast. An-tzu-ling, a pass between two high peaks of the O-ji-kai-shan range, formed the centre. With infinite labour the Russians had built gun-roads up the steep reverse slopes of the ridge to the crest of An-tzu-ling, where their main batteries were located. Branching off to the east and west from the centre, roads were made over which artillery could be moved to the almost inaccessible crests of the O-ji-kai-shan ridge. On the extreme right, quite close to the east coast, the crest of a high hill, known as Lao-tzuo-shan, had been converted into a well-built, semi-permanent work; while upon the extreme left, a short distance from the west coast, there was a similar field work, the guns of which commanded the approaches over a level valley to a low ridge along which ran the line of the Russian defences. The length of the Russian line was, roughly speaking, about ten miles, and for the entire distance a system of deep infantry trenches ran practically from coast to coast. At essential points of defence these trenches were strengthened by sand-bags. The Japanese position was about a mile distant, though at some points the irregularity of the ridges brought the line much closer. The country between, while it afforded splendid cover for advancing infantry and ideal positions for artillery, was about as difficult as any troops could wish to fight over, consisting of steep hills covered with loose stones and deep ravines through which many

small streams worked their tortuous way towards the sea. The Russian position, though it looked almost inaccessible, especially in the centre, where the rugged crests of O-ji-kai-shan towered in precipitous heights from the intervening valleys and over the surrounding hills, was not in reality as impregnable as it looked. The great height of the ridges east and west of the centre, and their precipitous nature, resulted in a great deal of dead ground, though the slopes in many places could only be scaled by hand-over-hand climbing.

As soon as the new disposition of his army had been completed, after the arrival of reinforcements, General Nogi decided to attack the Russians, along the whole line, at daybreak on the morning of the 26th of July. Despite a heavy fog with intermittent rain, which helped to make the atmosphere more dense, the general advance was begun about daylight. The infantry went forward under cover of the fog and mist without any artillery fire, in the hope of being able to close in upon the enemy's lines without opposition. The Russians, however, had thrown out strong outposts, which engaged the attacking infantry a few minutes after the advance had begun. Slowly the outposts were forced back. About nine o'clock the weather cleared a little, and the artillery opened a fire which was answered by the Russians. All day a heavy bombardment was kept up, in spite of which it took the Japanese infantry until nightfall to drive in the advance lines. Under cover of darkness the ninth division endeavoured to surprise the Russian centre. The advance was made in perfect silence, and part of the steep slopes

were scaled, but the task was too difficult for a silent night advance. The alarm was sounded in the Russian trenches, and instantly there was a deadly volley. The Russians had been waiting for the right moment. Though they fought bravely, and made desperate efforts to scale the rugged heights, they were easily beaten back and utterly routed. During the night the weather cleared, and shortly after daybreak on the morning of the 27th the artillery on both sides opened fire and a heavy bombardment ensued. The Japanese concentrated their fire upon the centre, especially upon the heights of O-ji-kai-shan, which the infantry had vainly tried to carry by assault the previous night. Under cover of this concentrated artillery fire the ninth division slowly worked its way from trenches, made the night previous. up the slopes of the ridge. They were under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, but the steep slopes afforded much cover, though the climbing was very difficult. About three o'clock in the afternoon the assaulters reached close proximity to the trench-lines along the crests of the ridge. The slopes at this point were so precipitous that neither side was able to use their rifles with effect. Only twenty-five yards separated the forces, but it was an awful climb for the assaulters, for the Russians, despite the heavy artillery fire which was being poured in upon them, gathered huge piles of loose stones from the top of the hill in rear of their trenches, and hurled them down the steep incline upon the advancing infantry. For over an hour the Japanese infantry vainly tried to make the ascent. Finally, a general

charge was ordered, and amid a hail of stones the assaulters gained the trenches. The Russians stood their ground bravely, and met the oncoming troops with stones, clubbed rifles, and bayonets. It was a sanguinary encounter for a considerable distance along the face of the ridge, where determination, strength, and activity counted for everything. There was practically no firing, the opposing forces were too close together for that. Absolutely hand-to-hand in fierce encounters, in which hundreds were engaged, the Japanese succeeded in penetrating the trench-lines, and holding them, despite the awful flanking fire which was poured in upon them. Upon the Russian right flank the eleventh division was also having a hard time. The key to this part of the position was the Russian fort upon the crest of Lao-tzuo-shan. Twice the attacking infantry scaled the hill and assaulted the fort, but each time were repulsed. In the neighbourhood of Chou-kou another section of the O-ji-kai-shan range was attacked by a portion of the right wing of the ninth and the left wing of the first divisions. The climb was a steep one, but not so difficult as that upon the centre. The Russians allowed the assaulters to approach close to their trench-line and then poured volley after volley into the approaching ranks. The attack was repulsed, and again the Japanese attempted to rush the trench-line, but they were repulsed. Upon the extreme left flank of the Russian position the first division succeeded in advancing as far as the Chinese village of Ying-chung-tzu. When darkness came the Russians still held the entire line, with the exception of the centre, which had been occupied by the ninth division. The eleventh

division decided to make an attack upon the field work on the crest of Lao-tzuo-shan, and accordingly advanced about one o'clock in the morning. The hill was slowly surrounded on three sides, and the infantry began the ascent. They reached the crest only to find that the enemy had evacuated and retired in junks from the mouth of the Tai-ho Creek, which is immediately in the rear. It was about five o'clock on the morning of the 28th when the position was finally occupied. The centre and the right flank of the Russian line had now been broken, but a determined resistance was still kept up on the left flank. About noon, however, a general retirement was commenced, and the entire line fell back, closely followed by the victorious Japanese, who by four o'clock in the afternoon had succeeded in occupying a line from Chang-ling-tzu railway station near the west coast to Ying-ko-shih in the centre, and close to Taio-yu-tao upon the east coast. This was about a mile nearer Port Arthur than the one which the enemy had been compelled to evacuate The Russians, though they had not so large a force at the beginning, were reinforced from time to time, until at the finish practically the whole garrison of Port Arthur was engaged. Their positions mounted some sixty guns, some of them large calibre and long-range. Two of these long-range guns, with three automatic quick-firers and three machine guns, were captured. The Japanese losses during the three days' fighting were over two thousand killed and wounded. The heaviest casualties occurred in the repeated attempts to break the Russian centre, and the injuries inflicted were in a great majority of cases

from stones and bayonets. Russian casualties were from eight hundred to a thousand.

The new line of defence[1] taken up by the Russians extended from the east coast close to Ta-ku-shan in the form of a semicircle over the Feng-hoang-shan range to the To-pan-shan hills near the shores of Louisa Bay on the west coast. There was no fighting to speak of on the 29th, but upon the 30th the Japanese decided to attack before the Russians had time to entrench and make themselves strong. This was the last line of defence the enemy could take up. Their next retirement would compel them to seek shelter within the lines of the permanent fortifications about Port Arthur. Early in the morning, before daybreak, the advance was begun. This attack was evidently a complete surprise to the Russians, for their outposts retired at once in confusion, in many cases leaving their overcoats and kits behind them, with their rifles piled close to where they had been sleeping. During the morning the Japanese infantry advanced close to the enemy's positions, and after a short, sharp fight succeeded in driving them from the Feng-hoang-shan hills early in the afternoon. The Russians still, however, held a hill known as Ta-ku-shan, and a smaller eminence immediately south and close to the east coast called Shah-ku-shan, which formed their extreme right as well as some outlying positions upon their left flank. With the exception of these the entire force retired within the lines of the permanent fortifications.

With the capture of the Feng-hoang-shan hills

[1] See Sketch Map A, at the end of the volume.

the work of the Japanese advance was completed, and the army was able to begin the necessary closing-in process upon the flanks preparatory to a close investment of the fortress. In going over the ground covered by the advance from Nanshan, about the time the work of the investment was commenced, one could not help marvelling at the success which had attended the victorious army, especially when the real strength of the Russian force was disclosed after Port Arthur had fallen. The country, from the first line occupied by the Russians after their retirement from Nanshan up to the last series of positions they were driven from by the surprise attack of the 30th of July, was an exceedingly difficult country to fight over. Literally speaking it is a sea of broken mountainous ridges, which, while they afforded cover for assaulting troops, certainly possessed wonderful advantages for a skilful defence. This was just where the trouble lay. The Russians were not skilful. From first to last they displayed an absolute lack of knowledge of how to place their artillery or where to run their infantry trenches. Even upon the positions where two months were spent erecting defensive works, many of which were certainly of a semi-permanent character, an utter want of knowledge was exhibited. Battery positions were chosen which were in full view of the enemy, and served as excellent targets for the Japanese gunners. Infantry trenches in almost every instance ran along the crests of the ridges full upon the skyline, where they were sure to be easy marks for artillery. It is perfectly certain that the Japanese reaped enormous advan-

tages from this want of knowledge on the part of the enemy. Their battery positions, on the other hand, were in nearly all cases selected with great cunning, and were so well masked that the ground round about showed that the Russian guns had not been able to locate them. Their infantry trenches, though perhaps not so well built as the Russian, were infinitely better placed, and showed a much wider knowledge of engineering tactics. Between the opposing infantry there was little to choose. The Russian soldiers stood their ground in almost every instance against the most furious assaults, but again and again they were compelled to evacuate positions which they ought to have been able to hold because they were marks for the Japanese artillery. The Russian field gun had a longer range than the Japanese, but there is no comparison between the skill displayed by the gunners in locating their batteries and in the practice after they were placed. During the whole advance the Japanese casualties were about five thousand, and the Russian less than half that number, but it is safe to say that but for the very great superiority of their gunners the Japanese would never have been able to reach Port Arthur without sacrificing many more men than they did. One of the greatest weaknesses about the Port Arthur position is that the fortress belt is much too close to the city, which is the centre of the system of defence. Not only can the town be most unmercifully bombarded by an army closely investing the place, but a shell fired at many of the central forts is almost bound to hit the town if it misses the fort. Knowing this—and they must have

known it—it does seem most extraordinary that the Russians should have allowed themselves to be ousted, practically without a fight, from the last line of positions they occupied from Ta-ku-shan through the Feng-hoang-shan hills to the shores of Louisa Bay. In the first place, this position, though it had its weak points, was really strong and might have been successfully defended for a considerable length of time. In the next place, it was absolutely necessary for the Japanese to win it before they could invest the fortress. The approaches to fully three-quarters of the entire position were over a level plain for miles, which could have been literally swept by artillery fire. Yet the investing army was allowed to occupy them at the cost of a few hundred men, and after a fight lasting only half a day. The whole story of the siege and fall of Port Arthur might have been different had the Russians exhibited even the most ordinary knowledge of strategy and tactics in the defence of the positions they might have held during the advance after Nanshan until Port Arthur was invested.

During the time the land advance towards Port Arthur was going on, little of any moment was taking place at sea in front of the harbour. Rear-Admiral Whitgeft had been appointed to succeed the unfortunate Makaroff in command of the navy. The blockade maintained by the Japanese fleet, while it was much closer than at first, could not prevent the Russian torpedo-craft flotillas from exercising considerable freedom of movement about the adjacent coasts. The larger Russian warships, however, for the most part

remained inside the harbour. It was upon the 20th of July that the Vladivostock squadron made its third raid upon the coasts of Japan, and, after doing some damage, successfully returned to its base. Meantime the Russian army was being slowly but steadily driven back towards the stronghold, and the close investment of the fortress was only a matter of days. With the Japanese army and navy working in conjunction, and both bombarding the harbour, it was obvious that the Russian fleet could not remain where it was without suffering severe punishment. The repairs to the warships were pushed to completion as rapidly as possible, and everything made ready for a sortie, by which it was hoped the fleet would extricate itself from the helpless position it had occupied for so many months. The squadron at Vladivostock was communicated with, and instructed to co-operate with the fleet in Port Arthur. The date of the sortie was fixed for the 10th of August. Accordingly, about dawn that morning, the fleet emerged from the harbour. It consisted of the battleships *Czarevitch*, *Retvezan*, *Pobieda*, *Peresviet*, *Sevastopol*, and *Poltava*, the cruisers *Askold*, *Diana*, *Pallada*, *Novik*, and *Bayan*, accompanied by eight torpedo-boat destroyers. Shortly after the start was made from the harbour entrance the *Bayan* struck a mine, and sustained damage which made it necessary for her to return. In the meantime the entire Japanese fleet had been communicated with, and put in an appearance when the ships of the enemy were about twenty miles from harbour. Admiral Togo manœuvred his warships so as to draw the Russian fleet farther away from Port Arthur,

and make it impossible for it to seek the shelter of the fortress guns. The opposing warships drew together about thirty miles from the harbour mouth. It was a little after noon when the signal flag for action was run up on the Japanese flagship, the *Mikasa*. The Russians evidently saw the signal, for immediately the whole fleet formed into single-line battle formation, with the battleship *Retvezan* leading. When they came within range of each other, about one o'clock, the Japanese opened fire and the enemy replied. For a short time there was a heavy bombardment; then the lines drew away from one another, afterwards approaching within range, when the cannonade was resumed. These manœuvres were kept up for over two hours. At half-past three o'clock there was an interval of an hour during which there was no firing. The manœuvres were then resumed, and it soon became evident that the Russian ships were endeavouring to escape. A counter movement to cut them off on the part of the Japanese brought the opposing lines closer together than they had yet been. This time the Russian ships opened fire, which was duly replied to, and the engagement became exceedingly hot for a time. The Russians concentrated their fire upon the Japanese flagship, and altered their course so as to avoid the closing-in movement of the Japanese; but Admiral Togo drove his line closer and closer towards the head of the Russian formation, all the time under a terrible fire at short range. The shells fell thickly about the flagship, but Admiral Togo and his staff, from the deck of the *Mikasa*, without the slightest hesitation, directed the closing-in movement to be

proceeded with. About half-past five o'clock a 12-inch shell from one of the Japanese battleships struck the conning-tower of the *Czarevitch*. Admiral Whitgeft and his staff, who were inside, were literally blown to pieces. The steel roof of the tower was driven against the man at the wheel, and he was killed and jammed flat against the post with the helm hard over. The roof of the conning-tower had to be cut away before the corpse could be removed and the steering-gear liberated. Meantime the Russian flagship was executing eccentric circles owing to her helm being held hard over. Fearing lest they should collide with the flagship, the other warships deviated from their courses, and the line of battle was broken. The utmost confusion followed, and the grouping of the Russian ships gave the Japanese gunners a splendid chance of which they made good use. The fighting now became most severe, and many of the guns upon the Russian battleships were silenced. The *Retvezan*, though most of her guns were out of action, fought bravely and with great determination. The catastrophe on board the Russian flagship seemed to throw their entire formation into disorder, from which the ships did not seem able to extricate themselves. After a time the Russian fire slackened, and about half-past eight ceased altogether. The battle was over. In fact, the real battle had been over for some time, for the Russian resistance, after the flagship was struck and the admiral killed, did not amount to a great deal. Darkness was now closing in, and there was a general movement on the part of the Russians to retire. The battleship *Czarevitch*, the cruisers *Askold*, *Novik*, and *Diana*, with several torpedo-

boat destroyers, steamed to the southward at full speed, while the remainder of the fleet proceeded back in the direction of Port Arthur pursued by the Japanese, with the torpedo-craft flotilla in the van inflicting what damage they could upon the defeated enemy.

In the engagement all the Russian battleships were more or less seriously damaged. The *Pobieda* had both her masts shot away and some of her heavier guns disabled. The *Retvezan* was shot through in many places above the water-line, while most of her big guns were disabled and the majority of her crew either killed or wounded. The *Sevastopol* and *Peresviet* were also seriously injured and rendered practically *hors de combat*. The *Pallada*, in addition to the damage she had sustained in action, was struck by a Japanese torpedo as she was about to enter the harbour, and was towed in with a great list to starboard. The Japanese fleet had suffered also, but none of the ships had their fighting capabilities destroyed in spite of what they had gone through during the day.

A detachment of torpedo-boat destroyers and cruisers was despatched to follow the section of the Russian fleet which had sailed to the southward in an effort to make good their escape. It was found that the battleship *Czarevitch*, accompanied by two torpedo-boat destroyers, had taken refuge in the harbour at Kiaochow, upon the China coast, early upon the morning of the 12th. The Japanese torpedo destroyer *Ikazuchi* entered the harbour upon the 16th, while two cruisers remained outside, and discovered that the warships had been disarmed the previous day. They received

an assurance from the German authorities that the Russian vessels would be detained at Kiaochow until the end of the war. The cruiser *Askold* was found to have arrived in the harbour at Shanghai on the morning of the 13th, while the torpedo-boat destroyer *Grosovoi* had anchored off the French Settlement, near the mouth of the Yangtze River, the same day. Both vessels were disarmed, and assurances obtained that they would be detained until the close of the war. The torpedo destroyer *Resitelini* was traced to the harbour at Chefoo. Her commander refused to disarm his vessel or leave the harbour, but endeavoured to send her to the bottom by exploding a mine in her hold. She was taken in tow by the Japanese warships and removed to the naval base at the Elliott Islands. The cruiser *Diana* went still farther afield, and entered the harbour at Saigon on the 24th of August, where she was disarmed and detained. The only Russian ship to reach a port where she had every reason to feel safe was the cruiser *Novik*. Probably owing to her superior speed she managed to get through the straits of Tsushima, and make her way to the harbour of Korsakov, on the Island of Sakhalien, where she was discovered on the 30th of August by the cruisers *Tsushima* and *Chitose*. The *Tsushima* approached the harbour entrance, and was immediately recognised by the escaping cruiser. She came out at full speed, and tried to escape southward through the Soya Straits. A severe naval fight ensued for upwards of an hour, during which the *Novik* sustained severe injuries. She then returned to the harbour. During the night the *Chitose*, which had been guarding the Soya Straits, was com-

municated with, and the following morning the two cruisers proceeded into the harbour and found the *Novik* partly beached. As her crew saw the Japanese warships enter they left their ship to her fate. She was bombarded until she was a total wreck.

But this was not by any means the whole extent of the disaster which befell the Russian Navy in the attempt of the fleet to escape from the harbour at Port Arthur. Early on the morning of the 10th, the Kamimura squadron of the Japanese fleet, which was guarding the Straits of Tsushima, sighted three of the enemy's warships steaming towards Port Arthur. They were the *Rossia*, *Gromoboi*, and the *Rurik*, of the Russian squadron from Vladivostock, which were on their way to co-operate with the Port Arthur fleet in its attempt to escape. All three of the Russian ships made an effort to retrace their way northward, but they had come too far through the straits and were cut off. After a fierce engagement the *Rurik* was sunk, but the *Rossia* and *Gromoboi* escaped badly injured, and made their way back to Vladivostock.

The attempted sortie had been exceedingly disastrous. For a second time the admiral of the fleet had lost his life in action with practically his whole staff. The command had then fallen upon Admiral Prince Uchtomski, whose egregious bungling made victory easy for the Japanese after the death of Admiral Whitgeft. Not only was the Russian fleet hopelessly beaten, but the *Rurik* was sunk and the *Novik* destroyed. The battleship *Czarevitch*, the second flagship of the fleet, was compelled to disarm in a neutral port, as were also the cruisers *Askold* and *Diana*. Three

torpedo-boat destroyers were also disarmed, another was taken as a prize of war, and two more were stranded near Wei-hai-wei. The warships which did manage to return to their prison at Port Arthur did so in a frightfully crippled condition. The Japanese fleet, on the other hand, was more than ordinarily fortunate. Though some of the ships were badly injured during the fighting, not one was lost, and none were incapacitated for further service. The fight of the 10th of August sounded the death-knell of the last hope of the Russian fleet in Far Eastern waters retrieving its former disasters and constituting itself a useful factor in the war.

Naval critics expressed surprise at the comparatively indecisive nature of the engagements fought by both sections of the Japanese fleet—that under command of Admiral Togo, and that under command of Admiral Kamimura. That the *Gromoboi* and *Rossia* were allowed to escape in their admittedly seriously damaged condition caused intense amazement. The apparent inability of the torpedo flotillas with the section of the fleet under command of Admiral Togo to close upon the beaten enemy at the end of the day, when if they had been within striking distance not a single Russian vessel should have escaped, is a fact which has been severely commented upon, as it showed a great want of cohesion among the various sections of the fleet.

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CHAPTER VII

The work of the investing army—Closing in about the fortress position at Port Arthur—The capture of Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan—The fighting upon the right flanks and the capture of the advance works upon 131 and 174 Metre Hill by assault—The work of the fleet in front of the harbour.

THE retirement of the Russians from the Feng-hoang-shan range of hills to within the lines of the permanent fortresses which belt the city of Port Arthur enabled the victorious Japanese to occupy their final line about the enemy's stronghold. The work of investment was commenced immediately, but the task was rendered almost impossible on account of outlying positions upon either flanks which were still occupied by the Russians. The first and most important of these was upon an isolated, precipitous hill, some six hundred feet in height, situated at the east extremity of what is known as the eastern fortridge, or that portion of the semicircle of forthills which extends from the northern confines of the city eastward some two or three miles along the southern coast-line of the Liaotung peninsula.[1] This hill is called Ta-ku-shan. The second of these positions was another isolated hill, known as Shah-ku-shan, which lies between Ta-ku-shan and the coast at the extreme east of the eastern fortridge. The possession of these hills by the enemy not only prevented the line of investment being drawn

[1] See Sketch Map B, at the end of the volume.

close around the eastern fortridge, because of the flanking fire from the artillery mounted upon their crests, but from the rugged heights of Ta-ku-shan the Russians were able to see all that was going on in rear of the Japanese lines. Upon the crests of both hills the enemy had mounted batteries of field guns with which they were able to place shrapnel almost where they liked among the bivouacks of the eleventh and ninth divisions of the investing army. The strategical importance of the positions can be seen by an examination of the sketch map of the Port Arthur position.

General Nogi on the 6th of August gave orders that these two hills should be taken by the eleventh division. The following day a divisional order was issued to the effect that the whole of the division should advance against them. At the same time the commander of the siege batteries was instructed to assist the divisional artillery with three batteries of 4.7-inch naval guns and four batteries of 3-inch howitzers. The attack was started about four o'clock the same afternoon with a heavy bombardment of the hills, which was answered by the field battery on Ta-ku-shan and the heavy fortress guns upon the nearest east forts. The artillery fire from Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan was silenced about six o'clock in the evening. The infantry advanced about an hour later in three columns. On the right flank the forty-fourth and twenty-second regiments worked forward against the north and east slopes of Ta-ku-shan, keeping touch with the left flank of the ninth division, which formed the left of the main line of the Japanese investment. The twelfth regiment, with a battery of mountain

guns, advanced against the east and south slopes of Ta-ku-shan. The forty-third regiment extended from the left flank of the twelfth regiment to the coast, and pushed forward against the slopes of Shah-ku-shan. The entire attacking force advanced in the form of a segment of a circle, extending from the coast-line around the two hills to the left flank of the main investing force to the right.

The Japanese artillery was so well placed in carefully masked positions that the enemy was unable to locate the guns, but when the mountain battery advanced with the twelfth regiment, the Russian artillery fire was concentrated with deadly effect, not only upon the battery itself but upon the accompanying infantry.

A heavy rainstorm greatly impeded the work of the infantry, and early darkness compelled the artillery to cease firing about eight o'clock, before the advancing troops had reached the foot of the slopes of the hill. The moment the Japanese artillery fire ceased, the previously silenced guns and infantry from the crests of the two hills re-opened. The attacking force was subjected to such a heavy fire that it was compelled to construct shelter trenches close to the foot of the north, east, and south slopes of Ta-ku-shan.

It is hard to give any idea of the enormous difficulties which faced the assaulters in their attempts to gain a foothold upon the crests of Ta-ku-shan. Upon the north, east, and part of the west sides the slopes of the hill rise sheer from the surrounding valley in steep rugged inclines, ending three-quarters of the way to the top in perpendicular walls of naked rock which not even a goat could climb, except at places where deep

ruts in the face of the upright cliff gave precarious footholds for hand-over-hand climbing. The south and part of the west slopes are easier, but even there the incline is both steep and rugged, and at the time of the attack there were neither paths nor roads upon any part of the hill. The heavy rain, which continued all night and the greater part of the following day, made the slopes sodden and slippery.

During the night, under cover of the intense darkness, despite the heavy rain and slippery condition of the hillside, a portion of the twenty-second regiment managed to climb up the north-east slopes without being discovered. A hand-to-hand bayonet encounter gave the assaulters the trench-lines at that point, an advantage which they managed to hold, but with considerable loss. About the same time a part of the twelfth regiment succeeded in taking an essential angle in the ascent of the southern slopes. All night phosphorus starlight shells were shot from the east forts over the Japanese lines and trenches, and powerful electric searchlights illuminated their positions, which were then subjected to shrapnel and heavy shell fire. The success of the twenty-second regiment in reaching the crest was partly due to the fact that the position of the hill itself prevented the searchlights on the forts from lighting up the advance, which was silently made in total darkness. During the night a battalion of reserves was added to the twelfth regiment.

The following day broke with a continued downpour of rain. The lines of the defending and attacking forces upon the north, east, and south slopes of Ta-ku-shan were very close to-

gether, but so heavy and persistent was the artillery fire of the Russians, especially upon the troops occupying the advance position upon the southern slopes, that the assaulters were unable to advance or reply to the rifle fire of the enemy. The Russian artillerymen in the east forts were firing at ascertained ranges, and their shells played havoc with the rain-soaked Japanese in their shallow trenches upon the exposed hillside. About half-past eight o'clock in the morning, the violence of the rain abated and the atmosphere became clearer. The Japanese artillery by this time had ascertained the exact position of their infantry lines, and at once commenced a heavy bombardment of the east forts and the crests of the two hills. About half-past eleven o'clock the Russian artillery fire had almost ceased, and the Japanese infantry were preparing to continue the attack, when a fleet of seven Russian gunboats and torpedo craft from Port Arthur appeared off the coast close to Salt Park village and opened fire upon the attacking infantry. This bombardment caused heavy losses, and the twelfth regiment with the mountain battery was compelled to retire and seek shelter. The rest of the infantry, however, remained in their positions despite the murderous artillery fire from the ships. Shortly before noon the four batteries of 3-inch howitzers were advanced, and opened fire upon the Russian warships with such good effect that in the course of an hour they were compelled to retire to Port Arthur. During the entire day General Nogi watched the fight from the headquarters of the eleventh division in rear of the two hills.

The twelfth regiment at once advanced, and,

after a severe fight, succeeded in reoccupying the position upon the south slopes of Ta-ku-shan, from which they had been driven by the bombardment of the Russian warships earlier in the day. About half-past four o'clock in the afternoon the Japanese guns concentrated their fire upon the crests of the two hills, when it was found that there was no reply from artillery on either. By eight o'clock in the evening the twelfth regiment on the south and east slopes, and part of the twenty-second regiment upon the north and west slopes of Ta-ku-shan, had advanced their lines close to the crests of the hill. A final charge drove the Russians from their trenches upon the crest, and they fled in confusion down the south and west slopes in westerly direction towards the east fortridge. At half-past eight o'clock the whole of the crests of Ta-ku-shan were occupied by the Japanese. The mountain battery guns, which had with great difficulty been brought up the south slopes, opened fire upon the retreating Russians as they fled within the shelter of the eastern fortridge.

Shah-ku-shan still remained in possession of the enemy, so the twelfth and forty-third regiments were combined in an attack upon it. The Russians fought with great determination, and compelled the attacking force to construct trenches at the foot of the hill. Several attempts were made to advance up the slopes during the night, but every attempt was repulsed. At half-past four on the morning of the 9th, the crests of Shah-ku-shan were carried by assault and the Russians dislodged from their trenches by a series of bayonet charges. One small corner of the crest was still

held, because it was so exposed to the shell fire from the east forts that the Japanese infantry were unable to occupy it. On the evening of the same day the Russian force which held this portion retired under cover of darkness to the east fortridge. The Japanese were then in possession of both hills, which they at once occupied by a considerable force of infantry to prevent recapture.

The crests of Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan were held by three battalions of Russian infantry and two batteries of field guns, while the attacking force of the Japanese numbered about fifteen thousand. The Japanese casualties during the three days' fighting were about fourteen hundred. The Russian losses are unknown, but they left about one hundred dead upon the captured positions. It was found after their capture that the hills were so near the east forts that they could only be securely held with great cost in life, so the Japanese decided to run their line of investment in front of Ta-ku-shan, and between that hill and Shah-ku-shan, to the coast. The natural conformation of the ground enabled them to do this with greater protection from the Russians' fire than to garrison the crests of Ta-ku-shan. Along the base of the west slopes of this mountain, and between it and the eastern fort-hills, there is a deep ravine. In it the eleventh division placed troops in well-constructed trenches with bomb-proofed bivouacks. This served a double object: it prevented the recapture of the hills and brought the investing line closer to the fortridge.

It seemed almost incredible that the Russian

plans for fortifying the position at Port Arthur did not include the construction of strong permanent works upon the crests of Ta-ku-shan, for then not only would the hill itself be impregnable, but its batteries would have been able to sweep the whole length of the Shuishi Valley with a flanking fire against troops attempting to close in upon the eastern fortridge by utilizing the dry watercourses and dongas, which in almost all cases ran at right angles to the ridge itself.

[1]After the Japanese had closed in their line of investment upon the left flank by the capture of Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan, they turned their attention to the right flank, where the enemy had a strong line of positions with a series of advance works of a semi-permanent character, extending from the high land north of the village of Shuishi, by way of Kan-ta-shan in front of the Chair Hill forts, through strong advance works upon 131, 174, 180, and 169 Metre Hills, to the sea-coast south of Louisa Bay. The pre-arranged plan of general assault involved the spreading out of the whole of the first division, with a brigade of second reserves as reinforcements, and a general advance along the whole line, which was about four miles in length, the left flank keeping touch with the right flank of the ninth division, in front of the enemy's centre. The advance was designed to be made in a strong and determined manner, as if the Chair Hill forts were the ultimate objective. This plan had a double object: first, to accomplish the necessary closing in upon the right flank; and second, to mislead the enemy into a belief that the Chair Hill forts were the objects of attack,

[1] See Sketch Map B, at the end of the volume.

so that the ninth division might be able with the least possible resistance to push its investing lines across the level of the Shuishi Valley to the base of the eastern fortridge, against which it was the intention to concentrate later in an effort to pierce the line of defence. The nature of the ground lent itself to the success of a plan of this kind, as operations upon the right flank could not be seen from the centre because of intervening high ground. Moreover, the Japanese in their previous successful assault upon the fortress, ten years before, had penetrated the line of defence at the Chair Hills. In pursuance of this plan, army orders were issued upon the evening of the 11th of August, that the eleventh division, working in touch with the ninth division, should make an attack along the whole line of the enemy's left flank. The divisional commander decided to attack under cover of darkness the following night. The advance was to be made in three columns, the centre and right columns to move first, with the left column as a pivot. The night was so dark and cloudy that even the closest objects were indistinguishable. A heavy rainstorm, which commenced about two o'clock in the morning, greatly hampered the movements of the troops. The advance was started by the centre column shortly after sunset. The outposts of the enemy were driven in, and two small Chinese villages occupied, while the main advance continued through them towards the Russian field works upon an eminence called 131 Metre Hill. The right column began its advance shortly after, driving in the Russian outposts, and closing in upon the enemy's lines upon a height known as 180 Metre

Hill. Another section of the column attacked the enemy upon a range of high hills which extend north and south the full length of a small peninsula which lies between the shores of Pigeon and Louisa Bays. Here the Russians had another advance work upon what the Japanese called 169 Metre Hill. The centre column was met with a heavy rifle and artillery fire when it reached a point about three hundred yards from the base of 131 Metre Hill. Several attempts were made to cut the wire entanglements upon the slopes, but they were repulsed, and the attackers compelled to entrench themselves and await daylight. The main section of the right column, after a severe fight which lasted until three o'clock in the morning, succeeded in driving a strong force of the enemy out of Ta-pan-chia-tun village, six hundred yards from the foot of 180 Metre Hill, upon the crests of which a Russian advance work was located. Advancing beyond the village in the direction of this field work, they were met with such a furious fire that they were compelled to entrench. The second section of the right column succeeded by four o'clock in the morning in advancing over the marshy ground to the peninsula upon the west coast, and, scaling the steep slopes of the hills, attacked the enemy's advance work upon 169 Metre Hill, which they succeeded in occupying after two hours' hard fighting. An hour later the Russians made a strong counter-attack, but were repulsed, the main section of the right column assisting from the neighbourhood of Ta-pan-chia-tun village.[1]

Immediately after daylight, the following morn-

[1] See Sketch Map B, at the end of the volume.

ing, there was a heavy bombardment upon both sides, despite the rain, which so increased during the course of the morning that the artillery fire of necessity became more or less desultory. The infantry spent the day in their trenches, unable to do anything, all the time under a galling fire. During the night the main section of the right column advanced under cover of darkness from Ta-pan-chia-tun village, and succeeded in capturing the advance works of the Russians upon 180 Metre Hill, after half an hour's fierce fighting, which ended in hand-to-hand bayonet encounters. The centre column also attempted by a surprise attack to cut the wire entanglements upon the slopes of 131 Metre Hill, but were repulsed, mainly owing to the enemy's skilful use of phosphorescent starlight shells and searchlights, which located and lighted up the lines of the assaulters so that they became easy targets for machine and automatic quick-firing guns posted upon the slopes of adjacent hills.

Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 15th the Japanese artillery began a furious bombardment of the enemy's positions along the whole line. Under cover of this artillery fire there was a general advance of the two attacking columns at dawn. In the face of furious firing from the Russian trenches, and a heavy bombardment from the fortress artillery upon Itzeshan and An-tzu-shan forts, and smaller guns upon 174 and 203 Metre Hills, the centre column succeeded about eleven o'clock in capturing the advance works upon 131 Metre Hill, after one of the hardest fights during the whole series of assaults. The main section of the right column then proceeded

from 180 Metre Hill towards the advance works upon 174 Metre Hill, but their losses were so heavy from the concentrated rifle and machine-gun fire that they were compelled to retire and entrench themselves.

As a result of the three days' fighting the Japanese succeeded in occupying the entire advance line upon the enemy's left flank, including their field works upon 131, 180, and 169 Metre Hills; and placed themselves in a good position to attack the advance work upon 174 Metre Hill, the fortified ridge called Namaokyama, and the fortification upon 203 Metre Hill. The Russian advance positions developed a wholly unexpected strength, and convinced the Japanese that they had a very difficult task ahead of them in capturing the remaining works, especially that upon 203 Metre Hill, which was enormously the strongest of the three. In their assaults the Japanese infantry behaved with great pluck and spirit, while the Russians defended their works to the last moment, and were only driven out by bayonet charges. During the advances the pioneers went ahead of the infantry and endeavoured to make breaches in the wire entanglements, which were made of ¼-inch thick steel wire fastened to stout poles, the principal of which were set in concrete. The ordinary military wire-cutters were no use against this heavy wire, and in their first attempts the pioneers had a hard time of it. Later, however, long-handled cutters were obtained, with which, after much difficulty, the wires were cut. The Russian force consisted of one battalion of infantry each upon 131 and 180 Metre Hills, one battalion upon the small peninsula

near the coast and 169 Metre Hill, and four battalions and one naval brigade distributed along the rest of the line. Mounted upon 131 Metre Hill were six field and two heavier guns. Upon 180 Metre Hill there were four field and two machine guns. The casualties during the three days' fighting were about a thousand upon the Japanese side. The Russians left a few dead and some wounded upon the captured positions.

The next four days were spent by the Japanese in a slow and costly advance against the work upon 174 Metre Hill. Night attacks were made to push forward the front lines, but the enemy was always on guard, and starlight shells and searchlights never failed to locate and light up the advances, which were met with a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. During the day the assaulters were shelled in their shallow trenches by the artillery upon 203 Metre Hill, Namaokyama ridge, and 174 Metre Hill; while the fortress guns upon Itzeshan and An-tzu-shan forts, and those upon the crests of Lao-tieh-shan, contributed heavier shells. The Japanese artillery was found to be wholly unable to silence the fire of these heavier guns, so upon the morning of the 19th the divisional artillery was increased to ten batteries, and two 4.7-inch naval guns from the siege park were brought to bear upon the Russian positions. The naval guns were well placed, and their practice was very effective in checking the fire from the fortress guns upon the Chair Hill forts and 203 Metre Hill. During the afternoon the infantry had succeeded in pushing forward their trenches to within a short distance of the entanglements upon the slopes of 174 Metre Hill.

After darkness came, the pioneers managed to make a two-hundred-foot breach in the wire entanglements. The infantry at once advanced and succeeded in getting close to the first line of trenches, but they were repulsed with heavy losses and compelled to retire to their trenches at the foot of the hill. On the following morning, one regiment worked up the east, and another up the west slopes, and carried the work upon the crest by assault. The last charge, about noon on the 20th, was made with great spirit, and ended in a series of bayonet charges inside the advance works. The Japanese casualties were fourteen hundred killed and wounded, while the Russians left three hundred and fifty dead. The work was strongly built, and consisted of a series of bomb-proof trenches, made of sand-bags, loopholed for infantry and roofed over with steel rails covered with sand-bags and earth, while the corners were strengthened with rails. It mounted two 4-inch guns and five field guns, which were captured, as well as four machine guns. A series of sand-bag trenches ran around the slopes of the hill, and were connected with the work itself by deep leading trenches. In front there was a line of entanglements made of steel wire so heavy and strong that the pioneers had to uproot the upright poles in order to destroy the obstruction and make a passage for the attacking infantry.

This series of determined attacks upon the Russian advance lines enabled the investing army to draw closely around the permanent defences of the fortress. The well-sustained and bitterly contested fighting upon the west flank also had the desired effect of diverting attention from the efforts

of the ninth division in closing in upon the centre of the Russian position, across the level of the Shuishi Valley.

In obedience to a command from the Emperor, on the morning of the 16th Major Yamaoka, one of the staff officers belonging to army headquarters, proceeded to the Russian lines, under a flag of truce, and communicated the willingness of the investing army to receive and forward to Dalny all non-combatants inside Port Arthur. At the same time the garrison was invited to surrender. Upon the following day the Russians replied, that the offer to relieve them of all non-combatants did not provide sufficient time for the delivery to be made. As there was no request for an extension of the time stipulated in the formal offer, the answer was taken as a polite refusal.

After the big naval fight of August 10th, the portion of the Russian fleet which returned to the harbour at Port Arthur was so badly damaged that practically every ship required extensive repairs. This prevented any great amount of activity on the part of the fleet during the rest of the month. The Lao-luh-tzu fort, on the afternoon of the 24th, carried on a heavy bombardment of the troops of the eleventh division close to Shah-ku-shan, so the cruisers *Nisshin* and *Kasuga* were ordered to silence the guns, which they did after about an hour's bombardment. The following morning the battleship *Sevastopol* left the harbour, and for several hours carried on a bombardment of the left flank of the army. While returning she struck a mine, and was so seriously damaged that she had to be towed to her anchorage inside. The same morning, about half-past six

o'clock, one of the Russian torpedo-boat destroyers struck a mine about two miles in front of the harbour entrance and was sunk. Another destroyer, which went to the assistance of the crew of the sinking vessel, also encountered a mine, and was so seriously injured that she had to be towed to shelter. The destroyers at the time were engaged in covering the work of a number of mine-dragging vessels, all of which ceased their operations when the accidents occurred.

CHAPTER VIII

The long wait of the military attachés and newspaper correspondents in Tokyo before being allowed to proceed to the front—The trip from Moji to Dalny by way of the naval base at the Elliott Islands—Impressions of Dalny—A sample of the manner in which the Japanese arrange matters.

DURING all the time the stirring events outlined in preceding chapters were taking place, no foreigner was allowed to proceed to the front, or permitted to know anything about what was occurring with the Japanese Armies in the Liaotung peninsula, except what was given out in the official reports by the War Office in Tokyo. About a dozen newspaper correspondents had been allowed to leave Japan on April 1st for Chin-nan-po, the landing place of the First Japanese Army in Korea, and permitted to make their ways on from there to the army which was marching northward towards the Yalu River. Whether it was by design that they were allowed to leave on April 1st is best proved by the fact that only two or three of them, by dint of hard riding from Chin-nan-po, succeeded in reaching the south banks of the Yalu in time to see the battle which took place upon the opposite bank on the first of May—the first land engagement in the war. Yet there are people who contend that the Japanese have no sense of humour.

The scores of military attachés and newspaper correspondents who had been duly assigned to the Second and Third Armies, and who were not

allowed to leave on April 1st, remained in Tokyo for four weary months, conscious all the time that the meagre scraps of information which were doled out in the official reports of the doings of the armies whose operations they were supposed to be following, gave but a crude and imperfect conception of what was actually taking place. The military attachés, of course, were not supposed to give free vent to their feelings of impatience. They were soldiers acting under orders. With the correspondents, whose newspapers were clamouring for news, the case was quite different. As the period of waiting lengthened from weeks into months, and from months into half a year, an ill-concealed frenzy is the only term which could be employed to describe the condition of the weary scribes. The Japanese are a most immovable, philosophical people. They contend that it is not only a sign of weakness, but a waste of energy to lose their tempers and ease their surcharged feelings in ebullitions of heated language. Month after month the waiting correspondents were told, with every appearance of sincerity, that they would be allowed to proceed to the front "very soon." The phrase was indefinite, of course, but the Japanese, especially those in official positions, are never definite when indefiniteness better suits their purpose. The situation towards the end came to be nothing short of ridiculous, despite the serious element involved. With an immovability truly Oriental, the War Office officials faced exasperated correspondents at least a dozen times a day, and listened to ebullitions of temper which often went as far as threats and abuse. When the correspondents had exhausted their vocabularies and

painted lurid pictures of the great harm which would come to Japan through the refusal of her Government to satisfy the public craving for news about the war, the suave official, whose face was always like a mask during these stormy diatribes, would smile and quietly return the stereotyped answer "You will go very soon," and retire as gracefully as possible. Eloquence, invective, threats, cajolery, nothing had any effect upon the sphinx-like imperturbability of the quiet little man in the War Office. Only those who lived through the "wearing down" process which was applied to the correspondents in Tokyo can appreciate the humour of the situation. There was no humour about it then, of course, but looking back now one can see that the War Office man, despite what he went through, must have found much to amuse him in the situation. There were correspondents, who have been long at the game of writing about wars and who pride themselves upon their ability to overcome any obstacle, who were seen to turn absolutely purple with impotent rage when the smiling lips of the War Office official were about to frame the same old reply, "very soon," to some heated protest or eloquent plea. The constant official use of these two words during the weary months of waiting in Tokyo resulted in every correspondent who went through the experience making a vow to expunge them from his vocabulary.

Finally, when nearly one-half the correspondents who had come to Japan, burning with desire to describe in rounded periods the valour and courage of the "little Japs," had grown weary of waiting, and had returned from whence they came to write

instead diatribes about a discourteous and impossible people whose given word was not worth the paper it was written upon, a condition of things evolved, or was evolved, which compelled the Japanese authorities to recede, and recede quickly, from their evident intention that all their armies did in Manchuria, and all their fleet did in the Yellow Sea, should become known to the world only through the medium of official reports issued by the Government in Tokyo. The correspondents who daily importuned the War Office officials were regarded, and not without some warrant, as wordy nobodies so long as the newspapers they represented were lost in admiration over the successes of "the wonderful little Japs," and praised their discretion in muzzling the interfering war correspondent. But the time finally came when there was a conference between the hard-headed, business office-people who paid the salaries and expenses of the correspondents and the enthusiastic editors who were lost in admiration. Foreign Governments, also, which had, at the invitation of the Japanese Government, sent military attachés to Japan, began to regard the keeping of their representatives so long away from the front, when they had been sent to watch the operations of the armies in the field, as a little discourteous. The most important consideration, which gradually forced itself upon the attention of the Japanese Government, however, was the fact that public interest in the war was falling off because of the utter lack of reliable information about what was taking place. The official reports were sent out, it is true, but they were first clothed with the necessary details to make the stories realistic. These details for the

most part were evolved from the imagination of the correspondents, and each account of the same occurrence naturally differed in its details for that reason. It was soon found that this falling off in public interest, due largely to the conflicting accounts which were sent out of what was taking place, was having a distinct effect upon the financial credit of Japan. Then, and only then, was the immovable hand of the War Office in Tokyo forced in the interests of what was regarded as the general good. The days of the wearing down process upon correspondents were over. Instead of vexatious delays and the stereotyped answer "very soon" to all enquirers, a commendable haste was exhibited in sending all the military attachés and newspaper correspondents to the front.

It was about the middle of July when the attachés and correspondents assigned to the Second Army were sent to General Oku's headquarters to witness the operations of the army in the northern part of the Liaotung peninsula. A week or ten days later Tokyo was practically cleared by the despatch of the third lot to the headquarters of General Nogi with the Third Army in front of Port Arthur. With the third lot of correspondents I left Moji on the 30th of July on board the small transport steamship the *Oyo Maru*. It was a beautiful evening when we sailed out of the harbour at Moji, after having been kept on board all day in the harbour for the reason, as we afterwards found out, that a number of Russian torpedo craft belonging to the Vladivostock squadron had been cruising about outside. No one seemed to know whither we were going. The captain insisted that he was sailing under sealed orders, and our

transportation tickets read from Moji to Liu-chi-tun, which we knew was the depot base in Ta-lien-wan of the Second Army. Our destination was either Liu-chi-tun (the depot base of the Second), or Dalny (the depot base of the Third Army), but which, was the question no one seemed to be able or willing to answer. Nor did we worry very much at the moment. At least we were leaving Japan for the front, and that seemed almost too good to be true, after the weary months we had spent waiting. By daylight on the following morning we were well across the Straits of Tsushima. For two days we sailed up the west coast of Korea, the weather being delightful. Our course was well out of the track used by steamers in ordinary times sailing for Port Arthur or North China ports. At half-past five o'clock on the evening of the 2nd of August we reached the base of the Japanese fleet among the Elliott group of islands. This base depot, we were told, was a very extensive establishment, but we were not allowed to see very much of it. In a sort of outside roadstead among the islands, sheltered from the weather, we cast anchor, and remained for the night in company with a dozen or more transports and hospital ships on their way to and from the base depots of the two Japanese armies in the Liaotung peninsula. The little gathering of peaceful craft was guarded by a gunboat, while several torpedo-boat scouts were to be seen working in and out among the islands. In the dim light of evening, miles away through the gaps between the islands, were just discernible the dirty-looking grey hulls and prominent fighting tops of the battleships of the Japanese fleet. Scores of transports and colliers

were also to be seen close to the fighting ships, while the black smoke from many funnels cast a sort of murky haze over the tops of the hills in the immediate vicinity of where the fleet lay. It was only a most distant view we were allowed to obtain of Admiral Togo's headquarters, but we saw enough to convince us of the existence of a very considerable naval establishment in among these lonely rock-covered islands in the Yellow Sea.

It was a little after dawn on the morning of the 3rd when we weighed anchor, and in company with three other transports, all convoyed by the gunboat *Chi-yen*, sailed south and west in the direction of Ta-lien-wan, skirting for a good part of the way the mountainous coast-line of the Liaotung peninsula. It was about noon when the rugged shores at the entrance to Ta-lien-wan loomed up large upon the horizon. We sailed bravely through the outer entrance of the now famous harbour of Dalny. On board our little ship all was excitement. At last we were nearing the actual theatre of war. Away in the distance there was dimly visible through the morning mist a tall chimney-stalk which we knew to be on the confines of the Russian city. Preceded by the *Chi-yen*, the little fleet of which our ship formed one threaded its way through a carefully-buoyed channel towards the inner harbour. The greatest care was taken in navigating this narrow channel, for it was well known that, only a few short weeks before, this bay had been literally full of submarine mines placed there by the enemy. As we made our way through the channel many were the speculations indulged in as to our destination. Both Dalny and Liu-chi-tun are situate in Ta-lien Bay,

and are only about twelve miles distant from each other. It would make all the difference in the world to our plans and prospects to know which one of these two places we were going to. Liu-chi-tun meant that we would have to travel northward and join the army under General Oku, while Dalny meant that we were to go on to the Third Army in front of Port Arthur, to witness the most spectacular *pièce de résistance* of the whole war. With anxious expectancy we watched the course steered by the *Chi-yen*. There was a distinct sigh of relief when we found that she unmistakably continued her course past the buoys which indicated the turning in the channel which led to Liu-chi-tun. Would we leave the convoy when our ship arrived at that turning-point, or would we also continue on towards Dalny, which so surely meant to us the big show at Port Arthur ? We neared the buoys and passed them, following the gunboat. It was to be Port Arthur after all. The faces of the little group of correspondents lighted up in a most marvellous manner. We were sure of our destination for the first time. It was our good fortune to be on our way to witness the greatest spectacle of the war.

As we approached the city, which was created by the Russian Government in a few months at the cost of millions of roubles to be the commercial entrepôt of her leased territory in Manchuria and the terminus of her great Trans-Siberian Railway system, our interest in the place grew apace. The city had not been completely destroyed, for in the clear sunlight the tiled roofs and red-brick façades of the most typically Russian city in the Far East stood out clearly. After so many months

of Japan with its toy wooden houses it was a relief to the Western eye to again behold buildings constructed of brick and stone. It was about half-past one o'clock in the afternoon when we finally cast anchor in the harbour at Dalny, close to an enormous stone quay which was piled high with stores and all kinds of munitions of war. Close to where we were anchored was a torpedo-boat flotilla and a large gunboat. In a few minutes after coming to anchor our ship was boarded by the military port officials, one of whom in broken English explained to us that the Commandant d'Etape had not yet been officially informed of our intended arrival from Tokyo. With many apologies he informed us that we would have to remain on board until the following morning, as the quarters in which we were to live while in Dalny could not be got ready for occupation before that time. During the afternoon, with the consent of the captain, we had one of the ship's small boats lowered, and a dozen of us went out for a row about the harbour. We had not been told where to go and where not to go, and naturally at once made for the flotilla of warships, in order to inspect them at closer range. As we moved in and out among the grey hulls of the vicious-looking little craft with their fierce appearing guns, we were the centre of much attention from their officers. We approached the gunboat, which had several large holes in her hull above the waterline that were being repaired with new plates. At the gangway stood a blue-jacket with a rifle upon his shoulder, doing sentry duty. An officer was evidently advised of our near presence, for he quickly appeared

on deck and levelled a telescope at us, though we were not more than sixty yards away. Instantly the crew of the warship was piped to quarters. This looked like a serious move in which our presence was involved in some mysterious manner. We quickly started to row back to our own ship. Signals were run up on the gunboat and answered from the dock. More signals were run up on the dock and answered from our ship. We evidently had created a distinct sensation, though the reason for it all was a mystery. Presently the captain's gig from the *Oyo Maru*, propelled by four lusty seamen, came quickly towards us, and we received orders to come on board at once, where we were informed that we had narrowly escaped being fired upon for daring to go within the forbidden lines of the naval compound. Of course we were innocent offenders, and our serious offence was overlooked when explanations had been duly made. We were, however, given a long dissertation upon the things we were to do and the things we must not do.

During the course of the afternoon we witnessed a little incident which illustrates the methods of the Japanese and their intense secrecy with regard to their military movements. We had sailed from the Elliott Islands with three other transports which had entered the harbour with us. During the evening we had spent at the naval base and the following day while proceeding to Dalny, we had not seen a soul upon the decks of any of these other transports except the crews, and naturally supposed that they were only carrying stores. During the afternoon we saw, to our amazement, thousands of troops being landed

from all three of the ships which had arrived in port with us. From the time they had left Japan until the time they arrived at Dalny not a single one of these thousands of soldiers had shown himself upon deck for a single moment. This incident is indicative of the very earnest manner in which even the ordinary soldier of Japan regards his military service, and shows how far he is willing, even in the smallest matters, to forego his personal comfort at any time if he is made to understand that it is in the interest of the service that he should.

It was ten o'clock on the morning of the 4th when we were permitted to land in Dalny. One of the staff officers of the Commandant d'Etape met us on the quay and conducted us to the Dalny Hotel, where we were to be quartered during our stay in the town. The building was neither pretentious nor roomy, and was tenanted by a single sentry when we arrived. Profuse apologies were made for the poorness of the quarters assigned to us, though we were given an entire hotel in which to live. This is a peculiarity entirely Japanese. It you are given, for instance, a most sumptuous entertainment in Japan, you will usually find that the host will apologise for the entirely wretched manner in which he has been able to entertain you. The more sumptuous the entertainment, the more profuse the apologies. We found that the military attachés attached to the Third Army, who had preceded us by a day in departure from Moji and arrival at Dalny, were luxuriously quartered in the magnificent palace of the former Mayor or Provost of the city. The same residence had been used as the headquarters

of General Marquis Oyama, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Armies in Manchuria, during the few days he spent in Dalny previous to his departure ten days before for the headquarters of the Second Army in the northern part of the peninsula.

There is always, no doubt, an element of the pathetic in the appearance of any city captured by and in the possession of an enemy which respects not its traditions and devotes to sordid uses its most sacred places. There seemed, however, to be an added pathos about the appearance of Dalny as we saw it two months or more after its builders had been compelled by the fortunes of war to evacuate upon a few hours' notice. Despite its crude newness, it was evident that Dalny had been a beautiful city, as cities go in the Far East. One could instinctively feel that prior to its evacuation the city, which had been created within a few months upon the shores of Ta-lien-wan, had proudly stood typical of Russian advancement and enterprize in this part of the world. Its generous proportions bespoke the confidence of its builders in its future greatness. Its broad streets seemed to be designed to inspire confidence in its commercial possibilities. Its pretentious public buildings, its well-designed and artistically conceived residences, its modern waterworks and electric lighting systems, all seemed to breathe an atmosphere of proud consciousness that, even in its crude infancy, the city was destined to become a great centre of population. These things one could feel rather than see, for the ruthless hand of the destroyer had sadly marred the beauty of the picture, though it was unable to obliterate

its large conception and generous proportions. Facing the principal square in the Russian section —all Far Eastern cities have a native or Chinese quarter—stood the gaunt, blackened ruins of the stone and brick façades of the civic buildings. They had once been a noble pile, and a credit to both their architect and builder. It was plain that they had met destruction at the hands of those who had created them rather than that they should fall into the hands of the enemy. The principal hotel, a fine building, had met the same fate. In fact there was scarcely a single public or semi-public building in the whole place which had not been destroyed. Among the handsome well-constructed private residences, fully fifty per cent. were nothing more than masses of charred ruins, evidence that their owners preferred to lose all rather than have their homes occupied by the hated but victorious enemy. It is difficult to convey the pathetic element which was so plainly evident in the appearance of Dalny. All her promise of greatness, all her architectural beauty, had passed, but in the passing there seemed to remain an atmosphere of pride which preferred annihilation to possession by the enemy. From the newly-finished cut stone quays with the derricks yet upon them, rent here and there by the force of dynamite explosions designed to destroy their usefulness, to the blackened walls of the pretty ten-roomed cottage, formerly the home of some officer or official of the Russian Government, all told the same story. The entire place seemed to be impregnated with an atmosphere of protest against occupation by the enemy. Probably because I came from the West, and instinct-

ively knew the story which the ruins of Dalny told so plainly, and possibly because I had been for many months a resident of wholly different cities in Japan, my sympathies involuntarily went out to the people who had so nobly laboured to create and who had so willingly destroyed what meant so much to them through motives of patriotism, but patriotism touched with a deeper and broader sentiment.

The city, I found, had been evacuated by its Russian population on the early morning of the 27th of May, after the defeat of the Russian army at Nanshan. It was evident that the people of Dalny had not even considered the possibility of the soldiers of the Czar being defeated at that battle. The news had come in the middle of the night as a shock to people who were prepared to give a royal welcome to the victors, whom they fully expected would drive the presumptuous enemy, who had dared to land upon their shores, into the sea. Instead of news of victory came the tidings of defeat, and peremptory orders for evacuation. There was no time for complete destruction or a well-ordered retirement. At any moment the enemy might put in an appearance. Hurriedly the inhabitants gathered together the most portable of their valuables; everything else was left behind. Even in their hurry it was not forgotten to apply the torch to public buildings, to damage the waterworks and electric lighting systems, to smash the machinery in the workshops. Private houses were burned with everything in them rather than that they should be desecrated by the enemy. Before leaving the railway station all the rolling stock in the yards was destroyed,

and as the last train carrying the fugitives proceeded upon its way to Port Arthur, every bridge and culvert upon the line was blown up with dynamite. The Japanese did not stop in their pursuit of the defeated Russian army to occupy Dalny. All their troops were required for another purpose. It was two days after its evacuation that the Japanese found time to occupy Dalny. The Chinese, however, had not been idle in the meantime. As soon as the Russian population had left they looted everything of value. What they could not carry away these vandals destroyed, so that when the victorious troops did enter the city there was practically nothing of value left.

Very naturally we expected that when we had gathered our belongings together at Dalny we would be allowed to proceed at once to the front. But in these expectations we were sadly disappointed. A few hours after our arrival we were informed that the chief staff officer of the Commandant d'Etape desired to see us. We were conducted to the staff office, and ushered into a large room, where we were regaled with tea and cigarettes. Presently a keen-eyed Major came into the room followed by an interpreter. We were at once informed that, doubtless through some error made in Tokyo, neither General Nogi nor the authorities in Dalny had been advised that we were coming. Strictly speaking, the Major said, he had no right to allow us to land or remain in Dalny at all, but as we had doubtless come with permission he had travelled afield from his definite instructions and allowed us to come on shore. Though all this was a trifle disconcerting, con-

sidering that we had languished five months in Tokyo waiting permission to go to the front, we meekly thanked the Major for his unofficial kindness, and vaguely wondered if we had counted chickens too soon. Some of us had visions of a return trip to Japan which were not pleasant. The Major then produced a huge official map of the southern districts of the Liaotung peninsula, and proceeded to give us, still quite unofficially he was careful to inform us, a résumé of all that had happened since the Third Army had landed two months before. From him we learned of hard-fought battles in which there had been hundreds of casualties, all of which had happened weeks before, and yet the public knew nothing about them. We began to take notes, but were quickly informed that, until we were duly accredited to the Third Army, we might listen but not take notes. We wondered, and listened with rapt attention to the rapid sketch of all that had happened. The Russians had been driven into the lines of the permanent fortifications about Port Arthur, after a series of bitterly contested fights; and at this moment General Nogi was preparing to bombard the fortress before making a final assault. When the talk was over we returned to our quarters, conscious that we possessed news of world-wide importance which we could not impart. The day following we were informed that instructions regarding us had come from Tokyo, and that we were to be attached to the Third Army. Again we had visions of proceeding at once to the front, but again we were disappointed. The preparations for the bombardment of Port Arthur were not completed,

and until they were we were not wanted at the front.

During the period of waiting we were to be conducted over all the battlefields, and fully informed of what had taken place since the battle of Nanshan. First we were to proceed to Liu-chi-tun, from where we would be taken on to the Nanshan battlefield. After that, we were to return to Dalny, and proceed in a leisurely manner in the direction of Port Arthur, taking in on the way all the positions occupied during the months of the advance by the opposing armies. A staff officer, who had been present at all the fights, would accompany us, and explain every detail. By slow and easy stages we were finally to reach the headquarters of General Nogi. Everything had been arranged with due regard to our convenience and comfort. We mildly protested, that while we appreciated all that had been done for us, we would much prefer to go on at once to the fighting lines and see for ourselves what was taking place. We were politely informed that if we carried out the itinerary arranged for us we would miss nothing. The preparations for the bombardment would be completed upon the 17th and the show would begin on the 20th. By that time we would have arrived at our destination, and would be permitted to see the bombardment and the general assault which would follow. There did not seem to be the smallest use in protesting that we would infinitely rather be given liberty to work out our own salvation.' We had been included in the plan of things. The day had been fixed, the hour set, for the great performance—the taking of Port Arthur by assault. No one seemed to

think that anything could possibly interfere with the due execution of these carefully arranged plans.

At all this we wondered, and some of us are wondering still! Truly the Japanese Army is a most wonderful organization!

CHAPTER IX

Arrival at General Nogi's headquarters—The General's welcome, and impressions of the man—Description of the Japanese position —First glimpse of the fortress of Port Arthur—Description of the Russian position.

THE faintly heard booming of big guns, and the luminous glare upon the heavens from the electric searchlights during the quiet of the summer's night, convinced us, even before we left Dalny, that we were missing some hard fighting around Port Arthur. We protested that we did not want to spend any time holding post-mortem examinations into dead-and-gone battles while there was fighting going on about the Russian stronghold. Protests were unavailing, the plans which had been decided upon with regard to us would not be altered. We would be allowed to see the whole of the bombardment, the assault, and the capture of Port Arthur, but in the meantime we would have to proceed to the front in the manner indicated. After a week or ten days spent in climbing over mountains and examining positions where battles had been fought during the advance, with an almost continual downpour of rain to contribute to the comfort of things, we finally arrived, upon the 18th, at the headquarters of General Nogi. They were in the small Chinese village of Swang-tai-kow, close to the railway line, and fully twelve miles from the positions taken up by the investing army along the Feng-hoang-shan range of hills.

The reason for this was probably that as yet Swang-tai-kow was rail head, and consequently the distributing centre for the army. A huge supply park strung its busy length along the railway line just outside the village, the streets of which were knee-deep in mud and crowded with transport of all kinds and descriptions.

The arrival of half a dozen foreigners at headquarters caused no little sensation among the officers and soldiers quartered there, many of whom had evidently never seen a foreigner before at close range. General Nogi and his staff occupied the largest house in the village. We were at once introduced to Major Yamaoka, one of the staff officers. Our reception was cordial enough, but it was plainly evident that we were regarded as an unknown quantity. Great care was taken to make us understand that we would not be allowed to send a single line to our newspapers about anything that had taken place, was taking place, or would take place with the army, until after the fall of Port Arthur. The operations of the Third Army were siege operations. The regulations which applied to the other armies in the field, whereby correspondents were permitted to send accounts of what took place, did not apply to the Third Army at all. It was to be regretted that all this had not been explained to us before we left Tokyo. It was quite evident from the tone of the conversation that, while we were welcomed cordially enough, our presence was not particularly desired with the army. We were regarded with suspicion, and consequently closely watched and hedged about with prohibitions and restrictions of all kinds, which were not only

intensely annoying, but prevented us from doing our work. After a short and by no means satisfactory business talk with the staff officer about our status, during the course of which we learned that we had no status with the army at all, a messenger appeared upon the scene and we were informed that General Nogi desired to meet us. There was nothing formal about the meeting. We were standing in the large central courtyard around which were the Chinese houses in which the staff was located. The door of the largest of these houses opened and the General appeared, quite unattended. He approached our little group in a frank and cordial manner. Instinctively we felt we had a friend in the keen-eyed, nervously alert little man who stood before us. Clothed in the uniform of a general of the Japanese Army, with the regulation peaked forage-cap, dark blue tunic, upon the breast of which glittered a single decoration, white riding-breeches, and high Pomeranian boots, General Nogi not only looked a soldier, but he carried with him that indefinable atmosphere or personal magnetism peculiar to all great leaders of men. He was not an imposing figure. He looked more like the colonel of a line regiment than the general of a large army. There was, however, a quiet dignity about the man which compelled respect. Instinctively we all stood at attention as his keen grey eyes flashed from one to another of the little group of newspaper men who were to be the guests of his army. As we were individually introduced by an interpreter, for General Nogi, like most Japanese generals, does not speak any other than his native tongue, he asked one or two polite questions about our nation-

alities and the newspapers we represented, after which he addressed the party collectively. He was pleased that we had come to the army which he had the honour to command. For a few days he would be too busy to show us any personal attention, but he assured us that, in so far as was possible with a fighting army, every convenience would be placed at our disposal, and we would be allowed to witness the operations against Port Arthur. The ever-changing climatic conditions of the country, he said, were very trying, and he trusted that we would take every possible care of our bodily health. If, however, any of our number did become ill, the Army Medical Corps would be glad to extend their services. Our arrival at the front, he remarked, was most opportune, as we were just in time to see the victorious conclusion of a successful campaign with the capture of Port Arthur. There was something indicative of great reserve strength of character about the quiet little man who so frankly welcomed us to his army, and in such a kindly manner expressed such evidently sincere concern for our well-being. The keen grey eyes and the strong lines about the grey-bearded mouth bespoke an unusual intellectuality, a strength of character, and a resoluteness of purpose which his general appearance did not indicate. It was only when one studied the man that the qualities which make him a great general and one universally loved by his men became evident. General Nogi was no untried soldier. He had already won his spurs in the service of his Emperor. At the previous taking of Port Arthur from the Chinese, ten years before, he was a brigadier-general at the age of

forty-five, and led his brigade in a gallant and successful assault against the powerful Chair Hill forts which were captured at the point of the bayonet. The fall of these forts, and the defeat of a Chinese force which afterwards tried to recapture them, resulted in the immediate surrender of the rest of the fortress. His eldest son, a brilliant young officer, gave his life for the Emperor, fighting at the head of his company in one of the assaults made by the first division upon Nanshan Hill a few months before. Little did we think, when we listened to the confident manner in which the General talked about the victorious conclusion of a successful campaign, that we would be with him for months; that we would see his victorious army hurl itself against the hills that surround Port Arthur again and again only to be repulsed. Few generals could have gone through those awful months, so full of tragedy, and retained their reason. Never was man tried harder, and yet, through it all, though he aged a year in a month, General Nogi was always the same kindly, capable man whom we first met and liked at the little Chinese village of Swang-tai-kow. Even when the awful weight of care and responsibility was heaviest upon his shoulders, when victory was still denied him after many tragic attempts to achieve it, and when his cup of bitterness was filled to overflowing by the death of his second and only son during the awful fighting upon 203 Metre Hill, General Nogi was still the same quiet, self-reliant, thoughtful gentleman who frankly extended the hand of friendship to half a dozen strangers, within his camp, months before, when he believed that victory was well within his reach. Whatever may be said

about the manner in which his enemy was underestimated, or about the astounding lack of information regarding the strength of the position to be taken, and the numbers and spirit of its defenders, it is a fact that General Nogi commanded his army always, in the best possible meaning of the phrase. He possessed the confidence and affection of his officers, and he was universally loved and respected by his men. It was partly this that made his soldiers fight as they did, and I think it was the consciousness that such was the case that made his burden of responsibility such a heavy one to carry.

After paying our respects to the General, we were permitted to go on from headquarters to the main camps of the army along the foothills at the base of the northern slopes of the Feng-hoang-shan range. We climbed the low ridge to the southward of Swang-tai-kow, upon the crest of which we could see the well-constructed defences of the Russians, for it was along the crest of this ridge that some of their strongest defensive works were located. It was easy to see why the position had been strongly defended. There was no sea of mountains here, but for miles a wide level plain spread out before us, covered with koilang crops and studded here and there with Chinese villages. This plain was triangular in shape, extending from the shores of Louisa Bay on the west coast, where it was some five miles across, to a point several miles east of the railway, where it ended in low hills and broken ground which finally merged, farther eastward, into the same mountainous country we had been travelling through for days between Dalny and the front. The southern

bounds of this plain were the Feng-hoang-shan range of hills, with the highest peak, from which the range takes its name, in the centre, almost four miles across the valley directly in front of us. This was the position from which the Russians had been driven by the surprise attack of the 30th of July after a short and feeble resistance lasting half a day. It seemed impossible that such a thing could have been. The ridge in the distance looked like an ideal position for defence. Its slopes were gentle with little dead ground, and directly in front, extending for miles, was the plain we were travelling over. It was, of course, covered with koilang crops and seamed here and there with dry watercourses and deep ruts which would afford good cover for advancing infantry, but such an advance could be literally swept with artillery fire from the ridge. Upon the east flank the position was weak. The Feng-hoang-shan range, it is true, extended, but in a somewhat irregular formation, almost to Ta-ku-shan; but there was much broken ground and low hills in front, which made the approaches to this part of the line of positions easy. Later, when we learned to know the ground better, it was always a source of wonder why the Russians ever allowed themselves to be driven out of this last line in front of the permanent fortifications of Port Arthur. Despite its weak east flank, the position had enormous capabilities of defence, and had it been properly held, the investing army would have been weeks, perhaps months, in taking it, and then only at a heavy cost in life, and Port Arthur would have been saved the awful damage occasioned by the Japanese bombardment from

almost the very day it was taken from them. So strong is this outer line, of which the Feng-hoang-shan hills form the west flank and centre, that I have heard able military authorities contend that Port Arthur would never be made impregnable from the land side until it was made the first line of defence, though the perimeter of such a line would be over fifteen miles from coast to coast.

The whole of this extensive valley, as we made our way through it towards the ridge in front, was a scene of the greatest activity. Radiating from Swang-tai-kow, there were endless lines of transport waggons moving in dark lines across the valley through the waving koilang crops to various points east, west, and centre, along the Feng-hoang-shan range, which was the base of operations of the investing army. On our way we passed large horse camps located about the Chinese villages, and among the hills in front we could see extensive bivouacks of infantry reserves and large camps of gun horses and ammunition limbers. Our objective, we were told, was the crest of the highest peak of the range, from where we would be able to see the entire fortress position of Port Arthur with the lines of the Japanese infantry in front, and their battery positions among the foothills of the range upon either side. It was about noon on the 19th of August that we reached the crest of the Feng-hoang-shan mountain, after a long walk and a harder climb up its steep slopes. The panorama which spread out before us was worth all we had gone through to see. Across a narrow valley, scarcely two miles wide from the base of the foothills of the range upon the highest peak of which we stood, lay the whole fortress belt about

Port Arthur, and the positions occupied by the investing army. Here in this narrow valley was the battleground upon which was to be fought out what has proved to be one of the greatest sieges in modern times since Sevastopol. It was indeed a wonderful theatre, and from our splendid vantage ground we eagerly scanned the equally marvellous stage settings for this great tragedy in the drama of war. And they were superb, those settings, in their quiet grandeur and magnificent conception. At once it was apparent that though man had smoothed its face and equipped its crests with guns, nature had made this wonderful fortress. To our right front lay Port Arthur, snugly nestling out of sight behind the hills, with only a few tin-roofed houses upon its outskirts showing in the comparatively narrow gorge or valley between the fortridges east and west of the city. Beyond the town rose the beetling brow of the Tiger's Tail peninsula, with the masonry of its powerful seaward forts showing from the rear. Farther back, and to the right, the towering jagged ridge of Lao-tieh-shan, fifteen hundred feet in height, formed a grim and lowering background to the lower hills upon which the land forts were located. In the nearer distance, extending from the confines of the city in the valley between the two fortridges, we could see the western fortridge where it began with the Sungchow forts close to the western bounds of Port Arthur upon comparatively low hills. Extending in a north-westerly direction, this ridge rose quickly to the lofty hill upon the crest of which was the An-tzu-shan fort. Then came the peculiar contours of the famous Chair Hills, with the Itzeshan fort upon the level crest.

The fort-line then seemed to break away almost due west to another and higher ridge, upon the highest peaks of which was the powerful advance work known as the 203 Metre Hill fort, while upon lower peaks of the same range were other advance works. Farther to the west we could see the ocean beyond the west coast of the peninsula, but could not discern where the fort-line ran beyond the crest of the 203 Metre Hill. Coming back to the outskirts of the city in the valley between the two ridges, the eastern fortridge rose abruptly from the valley level, and through our field-glasses we could make out a fort, which we afterwards discovered was the West Urhlung or Sung-shu-shan fort, standing sentinel at the western extremity. From there the main ridge gradually rose and fell in high irregular peaks and long razor-backed ridges, while in front there was a line of foothills upon the crests of which we could make out more forts. Upon the higher ridge behind, at various points, we could distinguish here and there a big gun silhouetted clearly against the skyline. About a mile and a half from the western extremity a huge hill seemed to throw its grim bulk out into the valley a short distance in advance of the foothills on either side. Its slopes were steep, and it stood well forward in the valley beyond the foothills. Upon its crests we could see a number of big guns partly visible. Afterwards we learned that this was the East Keekwan Hill, upon the crests of which were the most powerful batteries in the fortress belt. Looking farther to the east, both the higher ridge and the foothills in front seemed to fall rapidly away to the south-east, until we could see, over the

crest of the last low foothill, the dark blue waters of the Yellow Sea upon the south coast of the peninsula, about three or three and a half miles east of the entrance to the harbour at Port Arthur. Buttressing the eastern extremity of the fortridge, and extending well out into the valley, rose the precipitous slopes of Ta-ku-shan, standing sentinel, as it were, at the eastern extremity of the great fortress belt. Coming back again to the centre of the position, we could just make out, over the low back of the higher ridge close to its western extremity, the masonry of a fort which evidently stood upon another ridge closer to the coast. This we learned was the rear of the Golden Hill forts, which stand immediately upon the coast south of the city and upon the east side of the entrance to the harbour. Port Arthur lay between the nearer ridge and the one upon which those Golden Hill forts stand in a small hill-surrounded valley. The forts, which we could dimly make out upon the crests of the low foothills in the nearer distance across the valley in front, were, we were told, the strongest in the fortress belt. They did not look like the preconceived conception the uninitiated had of a powerful fort. They had no inaccessible masonry walls with crenelated ramparts. There were no big guns to be seen about them. All that was visible were low walls of earth, apparently a few feet high, covering the crests of the hills. These were not the kind of forts we had read about in history, with huge walls showing above the surface and their ramparts bristling with cannon. They were modern forts, inset as it were into the hill, with all their powerful defensive works underneath the

surface, and as little showing above the earth as possible. In rear of the forts, upon the foothills and upon the slopes of the higher ridge, we could see what looked like a low stone wall extending from the eastern extremity of the fortridge to the western, climbing the inequalities in the face of the ridge where it was necessary, but always just behind the forts upon the foothills. This was the old Chinese Wall, which the Russians had converted into a line of protected infantry trenches. It was the enceinte, or entrance, to the battery positions upon the crests of the higher ridge. A similar wall we could see in front of the forts upon the west side of the city. It began directly in front of the Chair Hills, and wound its way in among the hills as far as we could see to the westward. In the foreground, the small triangular valley, which separated the fortress belt from the positions occupied by the investing army, seemed to be bounded upon two sides by the fortridges, the one east and the other west of the city. The apex of the obtuse angle thus formed was the gorge, or valley, between the two ridges. The obvious advantages of such a front were at once apparent. The batteries upon the crest of the big East Keekwan Hill could bring a flanking fire to bear upon troops advancing over the level of the valley towards the forts upon the foothills of the ridge either east or west, while the forts upon the Chair Hills could also bring a flanking fire upon assaulters of the forts from the west. It was evident that as far as possible the Russians had, with the assistance of the natural conformation of the ground, endeavoured to reproduce in the land defences of Port Arthur the same strength

that the defences from the sea side possessed in a higher degree. The valley between, which we discovered was known as the Shuishi Valley, was by no means a level stretch of ground between the foothills of the Feng-hoang-shan range and the fortridges. Through its centre from east to west there ran a dry watercourse with steep banks upon the side nearest the forts. These banks were high enough to, and did, afford a splendid base of operations for an investing army, under cover from the fire of the fortress artillery. From this watercourse extending towards, and almost up to in many cases, the forthills, were deep ruts, or dongas, through which assaulting troops could easily, under fairly good cover, approach within a short distance of the foot of the slopes of the various low hills upon which the Russian forts were situated. Directly in front of the entrance to the gorge or valley, between the east and west fortridges, there was a large Chinese village. From this village of Shuishi the valley takes its name. A little to the east of the village, upon a low knoll or hill about a mile or so directly in front of the fortridge, the Russians had constructed an unobtrusive-looking little redoubt, called the Urhlung redoubt or Kuropatkin fort, an advance work which cost the lives of thousands of Japanese soldiers in the taking, months after the position was first assaulted. At the entrance to the gorge or valley between the two fortridges, about a quarter of a mile to the south of the village of Shuishi, there were some more advance works which proved extremely difficult to capture. They consisted of four lunettes, built in the form of a hollow square open in rear, and connected with

each other by protected infantry trenches. These advance works mounted a variety of large and small guns, and had water ditches and wire entanglements in front of them. They extended across the mouth of the gorge, and prevented an enemy from advancing in the direction of the outskirts of the city. Upon the west flank the Russians had a strong line of advance positions, extending from the north of the village of Shuishi in front of the Chair Hills to the west coast-line, north of the advance works upon 174 and 203 Metre Hills. This advance position, with the defensive works upon 169, 131, and 180 Metre Hills, was captured just before we arrived upon the scene, so that the Russian line west of the city now ran directly in front of the Chair Hills, upon the north crest of which the enemy had a strong line of protected infantry trenches, and from there to a high ridge, called by the Japanese Namaokyama, directly in front of the advance work upon 203 Metre Hill. The Japanese held the hills farther west upon the coast, between the shores of Louisa and Pigeon Bays, but the enemy's line of advance positions turned south-west from 203 Metre Hill and extended to the shores of Pigeon Bay, so that upon this flank the advance work upon 203 Metre Hill was the key of the position, and prevented the investing army from working east and south against the permanent forts west of the city until that key was in their possession. So strong were these advance positions of the Russians, that until 203 Metre Hill was taken by the investing army no progress was made against the forts upon the west side of Port Arthur. Without these advance works the whole position upon

this flank was dangerously weak, but with them it was almost impregnable. When Port Arthur was captured from the Chinese ten years ago, this west flank was the weakest spot in the defences. There were no advance positions then, and the Japanese at that time took advantage of the weakness to assault the Chair Hill forts from the rear, with the result that they were captured with comparative ease. Once the advance work upon 203 Metre Hill was captured the entire system of defence of the western forts was left open to the assaults and sapping operations of the Japanese.

Our observation post upon the crest of the Feng-hoang-shan mountain was the centre of the position occupied by the investing army. Approximately speaking, the line was in the form of a semicircle directly in front of the fortress belt. The left flank rested upon the sea-coast close to Ta-ku-shan at the east extremity of the eastern fortridge. The centre rested upon the Feng-hoang-shan range of hills, which begins in the east, with comparatively low foothills close to Ta-ku-shan, and extends in the form of a semicircle along the northern side of the Shuishi Valley to the right centre of the Japanese position. A narrow valley separates the right centre from the left flank, and across this narrow valley the line runs crossing the main waggon road into Port Arthur from the north. The right flank rests upon the sea-coast between Louisa and Pigeon Bays. This was not the original line, but it was the line occupied after the closing-in operations described in a previous chapter. The centre position of the investing army was practically an ideal location for both reserve infantry and artillery. The hills in the

centre of the Feng-hoang-shan range are lofty, and between them, through passes, are many good roads and deep valleys, well protected from the fire of the fortress artillery. No better locations could be desired for the placing of siege batteries than were afforded by the slopes of the many foothills on the north side of the Shuishi Valley. So well did the Japanese gunners utilize the advantages which these hills offered, that it was weeks before their splendidly masked battery positions were located by the enemy. The location of the advance camps of infantry and artillery, in the deep valleys and upon the steep reverse slopes of the hills, gave a maximum of convenience and a minimum of danger from the fire of the fortress guns. It was a strange sight to see these large camps clinging as it were to the steep slopes of the hills. It did not seem to matter how steep or inaccessible the slopes were, the sides of the hills were cut into narrow terraces just wide enough to give a level space for the narrow bivouacks of the soldiers. These terraces were in tiers up the slopes ending just under the crest. In many ways these strangely located camps were inconvenient. Their lofty positions made it a serious matter to carry up stores, provisions, and water for cooking purposes, but the Japanese soldier did not seem to mind. In his own country, where there are very few horses, he is accustomed to carry heavy loads at all times. This stands him in good stead in the field. The advantages of these camps are that they are sheltered from artillery fire, close to the front lines, and not easily surprised by the enemy. Though there were a few reserve infantry camps in the valley in rear of the Feng-hoang-shan

hills, when we first visited the front, the vast majority of the army was either in the front lines out in the valley between the two positions, or in among these hills where they were well sheltered and out of view. It was marvellous how an army of seventy odd thousand men were concealed from sight, though we could see from our hill, not only the whole of the position occupied by the investing army, but the front lines as well.

Where the Supports of the Garrison of the East Panlung Fort lived for months under rifle and shell fire.

CHAPTER X

The plan of taking Port Arthur by a series of forced charges—The spirit of the army—Details of the plan—The opening of the bombardment—The attack upon the Urhlung redoubt—The attack upon the Shuishi lunettes—The successful assault upon the East Panlung fort, and the capture of the West Panlung fort—The plans for the assault upon the Wantai battery hill.

It became evident before we had been many hours at the front that it was not the intention of General Nogi to spend any time in siege operations against the enemy's fortress. The plan was to gain a foothold inside the line of forts and, by a series of forced charges, break through the enemy's defences before he had time to fully realize what the intention was. In pursuance of this plan, before we arrived upon the scene, there had been a rapid closing in upon the enemy's east flank by the capture of Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan, two hills immediately east of the fortress belt. This was immediately followed by an equally vigorous closing in upon the enemy's west flank. This closing-in movement was conducted day after day with great determination, so as to mislead the Russians into thinking that the western fort-line was to be the object of general assault. The real point of assault was, however, to be the East Panlung fort, near the centre of the eastern fort-ridge, and the continued and determined fighting kept up on the west flank was to divert attention from the efforts of the ninth division to close in

upon the eastern fortridge in the centre of the fortress belt. That this was the plan is plainly indicated in the army orders issued to the first division upon the 11th of August, by which the entire division, reinforced by one of the independent brigades of infantry, was ordered to attack the line of advance positions held by the enemy upon the west flank with great determination as if the Chair Hill forts were the objective of a general assault, so that their attention might be diverted from the closing-in operations of the ninth division upon the enemy's centre where the general assault was really to take place. The significant language used by General Nogi in welcoming the newspaper correspondents to his camp also goes to show that not only was this the pre-arranged plan, but that the most sanguine hopes were generally entertained of its success. But by all means the strongest evidence of what was expected from the plan was to be found in the enthusiastic atmosphere which pervaded the whole army. Flushed with the victories of a successful advance, the entire army was in readiness, confident that in a comparatively few hours the flag of the Rising Sun would be proudly flying from the top of the Russian position. Looking back, it seems almost incredible that such a blind confidence should have existed. It was well known among the Japanese officers that Port Arthur was regarded as one of the strongest fortress positions in the world. Knowing this, and being still further impressed with what I had just seen of the position, I ventured to hint at the possibility of failure. That was quite impossible, I was told, everything was progressing satisfactorily. They might lose ten thousand men in the assault,

but they would not fail to take the place. Such sublime confidence is calculated to shake one's opinions, for it is just such confidence that enables an army to accomplish the apparently impossible. It was hard to be sure whether the fight that was coming was to be one of the most remarkable victories in modern times, or whether all this confidence would simply add to the horror of an awful tragedy. Upon the day we arrived at the front and got our first glimpse of the position, the closing-in operations had been almost completed. The capture of Ta-ku-shan and Shah-ku-shan had been followed, during the time the furious fighting had been in progress upon the west flank, by a rapid tightening of the line of investment of the eastern fortridge. Working in conjunction, the ninth and eleventh divisions had succeeded in running their lines from the east coast, just west of Shah-ku-shan between that hill and Ta-ku-shan along the foot of the fortridge, to the Chinese village of Wu-chia-fang, almost in the centre of the eastern section of the Shuishi Valley. From there westward the ninth division had established itself behind the high bank of the dry watercourse which extends from Ta-ku-shan to the outskirts of the village of Shuishi, while the first division and one of the independent infantry brigades had occupied a line across the entrance to the gorge between the two fortridges just south of Shuishi village. From there the line of investment ran close to the north front of the high Chair Hill formation, through the previously captured advance work upon 131 Metre Hill, in front of the stronger advance work upon 174 Metre Hill, through the previously captured advance work upon 180 Metre

Hill, and from there on to the north shores of Pigeon Bay upon the west coast.

When we reached our observation hill upon the morning of the 20th the bombardment of the Russian fortridges had begun. The previous day the batteries had indulged in some desultory firing to ascertain ranges, and had evidently succeeded in doing so, for their practice was good. At first the Russian guns did not reply at all, but after an hour or so they joined issue, and for several hours the bombardment was well sustained upon both sides. The previous afternoon the infantry of the eleventh and ninth divisions had succeeded in working small parties close to the foot of the Panlung and Keekwan forthills, by utilizing the cover afforded by a number of deep sluits, or dongas, which extend from the dry watercourse in the centre of the valley in many cases close to the foot of the forthills. When, however, the right flank of the ninth division endeavoured to push its line towards the base of the Urhlung forthills from the dry watercourse, the advancing troops were met with a terrible rifle and machine-gun fire from the small advance work known as the Urhlung redoubt or Kuropatkin fort, which was located upon a small knoll about half a mile directly in front of the two Urhlung forthills and just a little east of the village of Shuishi. It was an inoffensive-looking little mound of earth this redoubt, but it was an enormously strong work, and cost the Japanese over three thousand men before it was finally taken and destroyed a month later. The strength of the work lay in the fact that it was connected with the Urhlung forts by a system of three protected infantry trench-

lines. All this was evidently not known at the time the first assaults were made. It was in the way of the advance of the investing lines, and consequently efforts were at once made at capture. Taking advantage of the cover the surrounding ground afforded, without waiting to construct sapping trenches, the right wing of the ninth division and the left wing of the independent infantry brigade attacked the redoubt from the east and west sides, while several batteries of field guns, which had been brought down into the valley, kept up a heavy bombardment. It was an assault which was bound to succeed. Though they went down in hundreds in the last rushes up the level glacis leading to the advance work there was no halting. A ten-foot moat confronted the assaulters, and upon the farther side from protected infantry trenches the enemy poured forth a deadly fire of rifles and machine guns. In their headlong rushes the assaulters who were not mowed down before they reached it jumped into the moat, and after hand-to-hand bayonet encounters a few dozen managed to gain a foothold inside the redoubt. Evidently the Russians counted too much upon the strength of the work, for it was only thinly garrisoned. In a short time the defenders were forced to retire to the connecting trenches, but there they remained. About three o'clock the following afternoon the Russians in the connecting trenches were reinforced from the Urhlung forts, and succeeded in driving out the two companies of the ninth division which had been holding the place.

About the same time, the left wing of the first division with a portion of the independent

infantry brigade advanced from their trenches north of the village of Shuishi, and made a furious assault upon the first two of the Shuishi lunettes and the trench-lines which connected them. Of all the mad assaults which were perpetrated during these first few days this was by all means the maddest. Even before they left their shallow trenches south of the Shuishi village the assaulters were simply deluged with artillery fire from the forts upon either side and from the guns posted in the lunettes in front. One regiment refused to leave its trenches, and the major commanding was shot down while trying to induce his command to move. Never during the whole siege was such a rifle and machine-gun fire poured into advancing troops, not only from the lunettes and trench-line in front, but from the trench-lines and forts upon either side. Again there was an awful slaughter, but, urged on by their officers, the assaulters mounted the low hill upon which the most westerly of the advance works was located and successfully stormed it at the point of the bayonet. The enemy retreated, but only into the connecting trench-lines, and from there poured such a murderous rifle and machine-gun fire into the successful assaulters that they were compelled to retreat. These two unsuccessful series of assaults upon advance works in front of the centre of the position cost the Japanese between two and three thousand casualties.

During the morning we also watched the attack of the troops of the first division upon the advance work on 174 Metre Hill upon the west flank, described in a preceding chapter. It was about noon upon the 20th when this attack succeeded,

and the Russians were compelled to evacuate, but the success cost the investing army some fourteen hundred casualties.

Meantime, in spite of the failure of the attempts to gain possession of the Urhlung redoubt and the Shuishi lunettes, the ninth and eleventh divisions continued to push their advance lines close to the bases of the East Panlung and Keekwan forthills by means of the many dongas which seamed the valley from the banks of the dry watercourse in the centre, to the forthills. During the night these advance troops were to make an attempt to cut the wire entanglements upon the slopes of the East Panlung and North Keekwan forthills, to make way for assaulting parties. Under cover of darkness the advance lines were to be supplemented by reserves brought up from the rear, and as soon as the obstructions were removed a general assault was to take place all along the line, with the object of diverting attention from the effort to pierce the outer line of defence, either through the capture of the East Panlung or the North Keekwan fort, or both. The outer fort-line once pierced, the assaulters were then to break through the Chinese Wall which formed the enceinte to the higher battery positions upon the crests of the higher ridge in rear. The objective of the attack upon the higher ridge was the two battery positions upon the double-peaked Wantai Hill in rear of the East Panlung fort. Though the Wantai Hill was a desperate climb, even after the outer line of forts and the Chinese Wall had been pierced, once gained it gave easy access to the city of Port Arthur, which is directly in rear. Farther east or west upon the ridge there

were supporting positions in rear of the battery locations upon the front of the higher ridge, but behind Wantai there was nothing but a deep ravine which led directly into the city. Though the position was a desperately hard one to take even at that time, and infinitely harder later on, when the Russians, realizing the narrow escape they had had, improved its defences, it was the only point in the position east of the city which gave the assaulters a fighting chance, once they had gained it, of penetrating to the very centre of the enemy's system of defence. Though, of course, we knew nothing about all these plans at the time, we were wakened from our slumbers about ten o'clock on the night of the 20th and quietly informed, by one of the official interpreters whose duty it had been to keep guard over us, that the general assault and the capture of the fortress was to take place between midnight and three o'clock in the morning. Because of the refusal of the Headquarters Staff to allow us to take up our camp nearer the front lines, we were fully six miles in rear of the Feng-hoang-shan hills and our observation post upon the crest of the highest peak. We knew from bitter experience that the road was long enough and hard enough in daylight, but how to get there in the black darkness of a moonless night was beyond us. Finally, some Chinamen who said they knew the road were induced to take our party in Chinese carts to the foot of Feng-hoang-shan mountain. After over-turning the carts, missing the road innumerable times, and finding every hill in the countryside except the one we wanted, the party reached the foot of the Feng-hoang-shan

mountain about three o'clock in the morning. A prolonged fusilade of rifle fire induced us to gain the top of the mountain, despite the darkness, in much less time than we had ever even attempted in daylight before. It was the first time we had seen the position at night, and the sight was a weird and wonderful one. Searching the valley and the foothills of the Feng-hoang-shan range with their cold luminous rays were half a dozen powerful searchlights, while every now and then phosphorous starlight shells were shot out from the forts opposite, to burst high in the air and slowly descend to the valley below in clusters of starry flakes of fire. By the time we reached our vantage point the firing in the valley close to the East Panlung fort had almost died away, and though we sat upon our hill until the cold grey light of morning dissipated the long shafts of light from the searchlights, nothing happened that even looked like a general assault. Later we discovered, that though three attempts had been made to destroy the wire entanglements upon the slopes of the East Panlung fort, an entrenched hill immediately east, and the North Keekwan fort, all attempts had ended in failure. This, of course, made it necessary to postpone the general assault.

Shortly after daylight on the morning of the 21st the Japanese artillery began a furious bombardment of the eastern fortridge, which was occasionally answered from the enemy's forts. It soon became evident that the general assault which had been fixed for the earlier morning was about to take place. Under cover of a heavy shrapnel fire from the Japanese artillery it was

made along the front of the eastern fortridge. Though the advances were made with splendid spirit they were repulsed along the whole line. During the afternoon the East Panlung fort was set on fire by a high explosive shell, and burned fiercely most of the afternoon. After the mantle of moonless darkness had closed in over the scene in the valley in front, a combined attack was made by the advance infantry of the eleventh and ninth divisions against the East Panlung and the North Keekwan forts. The eleventh division succeeded in occupying a small advance work, known as the Kobu fort, which is situated between the North Keekwan fort and the big East Keekwan Hill. After holding it for a few hours, they were compelled to evacuate, owing to the terrible rifle and artillery fire which was directed against the work from contiguous forts and battery positions upon the ridge in rear. The infantry of the ninth division were repulsed in their attempt against the East Panlung fort after an hour's hard fighting, but they did succeed in making a partial breach in some of the wire entanglements which barred the way up the slopes of the forthill. The scene during this attack, with the bursting of starlight shells, the flashing of searchlights, the roar of artillery, and the rattle of musketry, was weird and wonderful in the extreme.

At the first peep of dawn, the following morning, the Japanese artillery concentrated its fire upon the East and West Panlung forts. The west fort was set on fire by a high explosive shell, and burned fiercely all day and far into the following night. It looked as if the pre-arranged plan of carrying

the fortress by a series of forced charges was doomed to failure. In spite of the furious manner in which the infantry had again and again charged the foothills they had in every sense been repulsed. During the morning General Nogi sent for the generals in command of the ninth and eleventh divisions, to consult with them regarding the failure of the plans. Chagrined at their repeated failure to make any impression upon the East Panlung fort, the junior officers of the ninth division in command of the troops in the advance lines decided to make one more desperate effort to carry the fort by assault. They were determined that the pre-arranged plan should not fail through any want of trying upon their part. About eleven o'clock the signal for the attack came. The artillery concentrated a terrible shrapnel fire upon the fort, and under cover of this fire half a dozen men emerged from a donga close to the foot of the forthill. They were pioneers sent out in advance to cut the wire entanglements and widen the narrow breach made the night previous, so that the assaulting troops might have free passage to the fort upon the crest of the hill. All but two were shot down before they reached the obstructions, and those two fell a few minutes after. Another party came out of the donga, this time larger in numbers. They ran forward up the slope towards the wires. Two or three managed to reach them, but had not succeeded in doing much damage before they too were all down. Then about twenty men with rifles charged from cover up the slope of the hill. Half of them fell at the wires. Half a dozen managed to crawl under and continued their mad rush up the slope.

Three men out of the twenty who started succeeded in reaching a small patch of dead ground just under the west corner of the outer trench wall where it had been battered down by artillery fire. Signals were made to the troops waiting in the donga. More men came out from cover, thirty or forty this time, and charged up the bullet-swept slope towards the little patch of dead ground far up under the wall. They fell in dozens, especially about the entanglements, but eight or ten reached shelter. For half an hour these rushes of tens and twenties continued, until the slope was literally covered with bodies. About a hundred men reached shelter under the corner of the wall. The last lot that came up brought with them a small regimental standard. As the little body of troops moved closer to the wall they came under a most awful rifle fire from the enemy behind. Men fell in scores. The place was too hot for them, and a retirement commenced. An officer, regardless of danger, called out an order, and, standing full upon the corner of the broken wall, planted the regimental standard. He was down in an instant, but his place was taken by another. The effect of this sacrifice of life upon the men who were retreating was magical. They turned in their tracks, and tried to return. Few of them made the journey in safety the second time. The men waiting in the donga must also have seen the flag incident, for they came out from cover in scores, and soon there was a narrow stream of men climbing the slope to the little spot under the wall. Not more than half, if so many, ever reached their objective. The ground was black with fallen men. Finally, when about a hundred and fifty were

crowded into the little patch of cover, an attempt was made to scale the wall at its lowest broken corner. As soon as they showed themselves the assaulters went down before a hail of bullets, but there did not seem to be bullets enough to go round, for a small party managed to reach the trench or moat. Clubbed rifles and flashing bayonets in the sunlight were visible for a few moments upon the top of the broken wall, then the assaulters disappeared from view. They had closed with the enemy, but they had not gained the fort by any means, for every now and then a soldier re-appeared over the broken wall and rushed headlong down the slope to the donga below, nine times out of ten plunging headlong in his flight. About the time this advance began it became evident to some officer in the donga below that the cross rifle fire from the West Panlung fort was having a deadly effect upon the gallant assaulters in their rushes up the slope from the donga. This fort at the time was burning furiously, having been set on fire by a high explosive shell earlier in the afternoon. While the fort itself was untenable, the enemy's riflemen occupied the trench-lines around the crest of the forthill, and poured in a terrible flanking fire upon the assaulters of the east fort as they made their way up the glacis from the donga. Two companies of reserves in the forward trenches were at once advanced under cover as much as possible into the ravine which separates the two forthills. At the point selected to scale the slopes to the trench-line above there was some cover owing to the steepness of the slope. Had the enemy's riflemen in the east fort not been fully occupied with the assault which was taking

place upon their own fort at the time, this second assault upon the west fort could not have taken place at the point where it did, for the assaulters were under direct fire from the trenches in the east fort. Quietly the advance was made up the forthill, and, before the Russians around its crest knew what was happening, the Japanese were clambering over their trench-walls. The few Russians in the trench where the escalade was made fought stubbornly, but were finally driven from the crest of the fort. This relief from a deadly enfilading fire gave the assaulters of the east fort a good opportunity. There was a rush of men from the donga up the slopes. In a few minutes the shallow moat or ditch around the fort was full of them and the outer trench-line taken. The garrison made a stubborn fight inside the work, which consisted of a network of trenches and bomb-proofs with a keep at the rear. The interior trenches were carried at the point of the bayonet, and, after several hours' fighting around the keep, it was also captured. For seven hours the desperate fighting had continued without cessation before the two Panlung forts were in the hands of the assaulters. The enemy, after retiring from the forts, took refuge behind the old Chinese Wall in rear, and kept up a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire upon the captors of the forts. All night long the Japanese worked under this awful fire, converting the interior of the fort into shelter trenches to afford them cover. As fast as they were made fresh troops from the valley below manned the new trenches. It is amazing that the Russians during the night did not make an attempt to regain the forts they had

lost. For hours after their capture the force holding them was small. Doubtless they thought the positions would be untenable, as both forts were commanded and directly underneath the battery positions upon the crest of the Wantai Hill. As a matter of fact the tenacious manner in which the troops of the ninth division managed to hold these two forts for months, although they were daily under the most tremendous artillery and rifle fire from the Russian positions in rear and upon either side, was one of the greatest feats of the whole siege.

Morning of the 23rd saw the investing army in complete possession of the foothold within the fort-line. The first step in the pre-arranged plan had been successfully negotiated after many repulses. The forts had been won through the personal initiative of the officers of the regiments which had made the assault, for they did so entirely without orders and during the absence of the general of the division. The work of both the officers and the men was beyond praise. Their losses had been heavy, but they had gotten what they were told to get, despite the furious opposition of the enemy. With this foothold inside the fort-ridge, it was possible to make the next and final step in the pre-arranged plan. Army orders were accordingly issued, directing the right brigade of the eleventh division and the left brigade of the ninth division to combine in an advance through the captured East Panlung fort. From there the Chinese Wall, which was the enceinte to the higher fortridge, was to be attacked and pierced. The combined forces were then to divide, the left brigade of the ninth division attempting the capture

of the battery positions upon the crest of the Wantai Hill, while the right brigade of the eleventh division was to advance against the rear of the North Keekwan fort, and, after capturing it, proceed to the assistance of the left brigade of the ninth division by attacking the north-east slopes of Wantai and join forces in the neck between the two peaks. This ambitious plan was to be carried into effect between midnight and three o'clock on the morning of the 24th. Though we did not know the details of these plans at the time, there was something in the atmosphere that told us that the final act in the drama would be put on that night.

CHAPTER XI

The Russian counter-attack—The fighting around the Panlung forts—The counter-attack repulsed—The attack upon the Wantai Hill by the ninth division—The capture of two battery positions, and the unsuccessful assault upon the third—The bombardment that came with the dawn—The last act in the tragedy, the unsuccessful combined attack upon the Wantai Hill and the North Keekwan fort.

No one who was within hearing and feeling distance—for one could see very little indeed—of the awful fight which took place in front of Port Arthur upon the night of the 23rd and the morning of the 24th of August is ever likely to forget, or have his impressions of what took place dimmed or altered by the toning-down process usual in official reports recording unsuccessful military operations. It was a night of awful horror; for the inky darkness which shut out the scene only served to accentuate the unmistakable sounds of carnage which came up from the valley below, which lay between the two positions. There was the roar of cannon in continuous discharge, hundreds of them, the shriek of hurtling shells, the horrid, awful din of musketry volleys, so incessant that the sound was merged into one continuous rolling avalanche, the burring of machine guns and the popping of automatic quick-firers in continual action. During the lulls in this frightful medley of sounds, which one knew carried death with them, there came faintly other sounds which meant the last of

hundreds of brave soldiers. They came, for instance, in the sound of victorious "Banzais!" cut short in a second with the murderous din of rifle volleys and the rattle of machine guns, followed by that ominous, oppressive silence which, at such a moment in war, spells repulse and carnage. As if to make the tragedy more weird than tragedy usually is, there were brilliant phosphorescent star-light shells shot out from the Russian fortress over the scene in the valley, falling slowly in clusters of fire which seemed to show so much and in reality showed so little, and the cold luminous rays of half a dozen powerful electric searchlights which shot out from the higher forts in huge shafts of brilliant light that searched the valley and the hills upon either side with great arcs, lighting up, here clouds of white smoke from bursting shells, there moving lines of khaki, and farther on a battery of guns in action. The whole combined to make a scene such as Dante never pictured of the Inferno. But all this is not how it happened, what took place, or what the end was.

For hours after the heavy mantle of moonless darkness shut out the view of the theatre of war the silence was oppressive. It proved to be the proverbial calm before the storm. Every now and then our observation hill was lighted up bright as midday, as the ever-searching rays of the search-lights caught its huge bulk in their restless pene-trating sweep of the foothills of the Feng-hoang-shan range, where the Japanese artillery was located. During these moments we could see the drawn, anxious faces of the non-combatant officers of the army who had crowded the hill, anxious to see what the whole army expected would be the last

act in the drama before Port Arthur, as they crouched behind stones out of the searching glare of the lights. Everything was in readiness, we had been told, and the assault would take place at the appointed time. They were anxious hours of waiting those. Not a sound came up from the valley below us, where an army was waiting to carry by assault one of the most powerful fortress positions in the world. Suddenly out of the darkness came a fusilade of rifle fire, a full two hours before the appointed time. There was no mistaking from whence it came, for it came again, this time in volleys, from the foot of the Wantai Hill. What did it mean? Had the plans been changed again, and the time for the assault moved on by two hours? No, that could not be the case. It must be a Russian counter-attack, for the searchlights continued diligently searching the valley instead of lighting up the place from whence the firing came, as would certainly have been done had the attack been made by the Japanese. This deduction came quickly, but not more quickly than the avalanche of rifle and machine-gun fire which swept down towards the captured forts. A desperate assault was going on around them. As volley after volley followed one another in quick succession we knew that the gallant defenders of the forts captured two days before were bravely meeting the onslaught of the enemy. The attempts at capture were evidently successfully met, for slowly the waves of sound seemed to spread out and redouble in volume as the assaulters worked down the ravines between the forthills and came under fire from the Japanese reserves in the advance trenches in the valley close to the bases of the

forthills. The searchlights, which had until this moment been lighting up the Japanese lines in the valley, to assist the fort artillery in placing the large bodies of supports which were being sent forward to the front lines, now swung slowly around and lighted up the scene where the firing was taking place. The intention of the enemy now became evident. This was no small sortie, but a strong, well-planned attempt to cut off the Japanese forces in the two captured forts, which either by accident or skilful design had forestalled the Japanese general assault by a couple of hours. When the outflanking forces of the enemy reached the level of the Shuishi Valley and endeavoured to close in upon and cut off the retreat of the troops in the captured forts, they were met with a furious rifle fire from the supports in the trenches. This was the turning-point in the success of the counter-attack. For half an hour or more a perfect hell of fire was kept up. What the result would be no one knew. Then slowly the wave of sound swept back up the slopes of the fort-ridge, followed by the converging rays of two searchlights, one from the east and the other from the west. As the apex formed by the con-vering shafts of light widened into a more and more obtuse angle, we knew that the Russian outflanking attempt had ended in failure, and that the Japanese were slowly forcing the enemy back up the slopes of the fortridge towards the Chinese Wall in rear of the two Panlung forts, while the rifle and machine-gun fire from the wall and the slopes of the higher ridge in rear was playing havoc with the lines of the pursuing troops, which were lighted up by converging rays of two search-

lights, one upon the east and the other upon the west.

In the meantime it was evident, from the fact that the enemy was bursting starlight shells over the Japanese lines east and west along the entire position, that the pre-arranged general assault was about to take place, for the starlight shells were designed to place the large number of supports which were being sent forward to the front lines. It came with startling suddenness. In a moment the whole front of the eastern fortridge was a perfect inferno of rifle and machine-gun fire, as thousands of assaulters emerged from their trenches and swarmed up the forthills. In the gorge of the Shuishi Valley between the two fortridges and away upon the west flank the fighting was also on. The Japanese artillery, realizing the awful havoc which was being wrought by the searchlights working in conjunction with the large number of machine and automatic quick-firing guns which the enemy possessed, put shell after shell at the lights, which we could see being blanketed from time to time. Then the Russians resorted to a clever ruse. One after the other the lights upon the east and west went out, as if the gunners had succeeded in their object. Darkness reigned for a few minutes except for the great numbers of starlight shells which were being sent from the Russian forts to locate large bodies of the assaulters. Suddenly the supposedly dead searchlights came to life again, by being swung from rear to front across the heavens, and lines of troops were lighted up in the centre of the position, to be swept with rifle and machine-gun fire. The slaughter must have been terrible, for the assaulters kept stub-

bornly on in their efforts to reach the enemy's defences.

While all this was going on the ninth division had driven the outflanking forces of the enemy back up the Panlung forthills, where they took refuge behind the Chinese Wall. But the repulse of the counter-attack was not all that lay before the troops of the ninth division. They had their part in the pre-arranged plan to carry out as well. The Chinese Wall was furiously assaulted at its weakest point, and, after half an hour's bitter fighting, successfully pierced. They had now made the necessary breach in the enceinte to the higher fortridge, but the enemy compelled them to hold it at considerable loss in life, for they tried re-capture several times with great determination. There still lay between the successful assaulters and their goal the awful climb up the steep bullet-swept slopes to the neck between the two peaks of the Wantai Hill. The pre-arranged plan provided for a combined assault from this point, by the sixth brigade of the ninth division, against the battery positions upon Wantai, and by the tenth brigade of the eleventh division, first against the North Keekwan fort, and then against the slopes of Wantai from the east. There was a long delay in the arrival upon the scene of the tenth brigade of the eleventh division, and finally word came to the impatient assaulters, waiting at the foot of the Wantai Hill under a withering fire from almost every quarter, that the brigade which had been counted upon to assist in the desperate effort had run out of ammunition and could not come for hours. Was the whole plan of assault to be defeated by the want of ammunition, after all that had been gone

through that awful night? The psychological moment for the attack upon Wantai was now, before the enemy had time to gather himself together for a defence of the hill. Realizing all this, two companies of the sixth brigade of the ninth division volunteered to go on alone and attempt to capture the battery positions upon the hill above them. Slowly, and under a withering fire from all sides, the intrepid assaulters worked their way up the steep slopes. It is impossible to conceive a more awful fire than they were under. The Russians, anticipating the assault, had posted a number of machine guns upon the crest of the hill and in the low neck between the two peaks. The whole crest was fringed with fire, but the two companies gallantly kept on. The battery position upon the lower of the two peaks, known as H fort, was reached, and its defenders swept down the reverse slopes by a furious bayonet charge. Still another smaller battery position upon the crest was occupied in the same manner, and the assaulters gained the neck upon the farther side of which, up a steep slope, was the last battery position upon the highest peak of Wantai. With their numbers sadly decimated by the awful fire they were under, two unsuccessful efforts were made to charge up this slope. During the last attempt the only officer left was killed, and barely two hundred men remained out of the two full companies which started upon the hazardous attempt two hours before. This last assault was too much even for their splendid determination. With the goal of their ambition scarcely five hundred yards away, they were compelled to retire and evacuate the two positions they had won. Slowly

they made their way to a dead angle at the foot of the hill, and there entrenched themselves.

Just before dawn, the tenth brigade of the eleventh division having arrived on the scene, a second attempt was made to carry out the pre-arranged plan by attacking Wantai and the North Keekwan fort simultaneously. The tenth brigade of the eleventh division worked along the Chinese Wall and delivered a furious assault upon the North Keekwan fort from the rear. The attack was made with great spirit, but the defenders were waiting and ready. A terrible fire was poured into the advancing troops, who, when they reached the fort, found that between them and their objective there was a wide moat some thirty feet across. Unlike the shallow moat around the Panlung forts, this one was built of masonry and had defences which could not be assaulted in this manner. Meantime the Russians were not idle. Machine guns in the fort and behind the Chinese Wall in rear were brought to bear upon the assaulters with terrible results. Repulsed, but not broken, the brigade then advanced to assault the north-east slopes of Wantai, but here again they found the enemy prepared to receive them. The slopes of the hill were simply swept with fire from rifles and machine guns. Twice attempts were made to advance, but each time the assaulters were compelled to retire, and finally forced to entrench themselves at the foot of the hill. Two more companies, with three companies in reserve, from the sixth brigade of the ninth division again endeavoured to gain the crests of Wantai. The Russians had, however, greatly increased the force which held the positions, and in addition

had added to the number of their machine guns. Three attempts were made to retake the battery positions captured earlier in the night, but without success. The last attempt of both brigades to assault Wantai Hill was made just as dawn was breaking. All night the artillery upon both sides had done little firing, because of the difficulty of ascertaining where their respective infantry lines were, but as soon as it became light enough the Japanese artillery opened one of the most furious bombardments of the whole stage. It was one of the most splendid and appalling sights imaginable. Beginning with a concentrated fire against the most easterly forts upon the eastern fortridge, by every available gun upon the left and centre of the Japanese position, it continued until the forts at the extremity of the ridge were a perfect hell of bursting shells. Then the avalanche moved slowly up the ridge, the fire increasing in volume as the guns upon the right centre and the right flank joined in, until it reached the western extremity of the fortridge and the city behind. It looked as if there was not a single foot of ground which had not its own particular shell, and the whole ridge was enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke and dust from the explosions. Towards the finish four hundred guns roared in continuous discharge, and thousands of shells of various calibre pounded the western extremity of the fortridge and the crests of Wantai with merciless fury. The practice was good, for every shell seemed to hit its mark. Half an hour it lasted, and then ceased. Slowly the clouds of smoke and dust which obscured the view of the ridge rolled away, and the battered ramparts of the forts told an eloquent story of

the severity and accuracy of the fire as they stood out silent in the dim grey dawn of the morning. One felt that these battered dust-heaps which crowned the ridge had been deprived of their usefulness, and that the assaulters of the Wantai Hill must have been able to accomplish their object. But these were modern forts and protected battery positions almost impervious to shell fire. No sooner had the clouds of smoke and dust lifted than the nearest of the forts began to pour a heavy shrapnel fire into the shallow trenches of the disappointed assaulters along the foot of the Wantai Hill. With that stubbornness and refusal to accept defeat peculiar to the soldiers of Japan, the sadly decimated brigades upon the slopes of the Wantai Hill refused to leave their trenches, but remained there all day under a terrible bombardment, only to be ordered to leave them the following night. The vantage ground gained behind the Chinese Wall had also to be evacuated, so that the night of the 24th saw the investing army holding only the two Panlung forts captured upon the afternoon and evening of the 22nd. The tragedy was over, and the butcher's bill ran to some fifteen thousand killed and wounded,—an awful price to pay for so complete a repulse.

That the whole plan was a mistake is best proved by the disastrous result; that it might have succeeded, is indicated by the story of how near the first attempt did come to being successful. Had it been successful, it would have been one of the most brilliant victories in modern times, and the man who conceived it would have been regarded as a genius; its failure made it a blunder,

and one open to a thousand sound criticisms, for the price paid in the lives of brave soldiers was enormous and the advantage gained practically nothing. There can be no doubt that General Nogi knew something of the hazardous nature of the attempt he was making, but that he wholly under-estimated the enormous strength of the position and the number and spirit of the defenders, is also obvious. The fact that he sent a whole brigade to capture by assault the North Keekwan fort, which everyone afterwards found out had a moat some thirty feet in width, some twenty-five feet in depth, made of masonry and with caponiers and galleries which took a month's hard fighting later on to capture, shows that his intelligence department was not up to much. If, instead of dividing his attacking force, he had directed its whole energies to the capture of the Wantai Hill immediately after the Russians were driven back, and when the tenth brigade of the eleventh division failed to take its share in the attack because it had no ammunition, the whole hill might have been captured. That it could have been held if once taken there can be no doubt, for the two Panlung forts were held for weeks and weeks despite the most determined efforts of the Russians to recapture them. It must be remembered that getting ammunition to the front lines was a matter of great difficulty at this period, for it had to be brought through very shallow trenches for nearly a mile under the direct fire of the enemy. Perhaps the greatest reason for the failure of the plan to capture the position by forced charges against its centre, was the skilfully timed counter-attack of the enemy. Whether the progress of events

up to that time had given them an inkling of the Japanese plans or not, it is a fact that it was the cause of many of the casualties sustained, and, more important still, responsible for many of the mistakes which doomed the plan to failure. The avoidance of a long siege meant much to the Japanese cause at that time. The Third Army was urgently needed in the north. Had it been at the battle of Liao-yang, Kuropatkin must have been annihilated. All these things doubtless entered into General Nogi's decision to attempt to take the fortress of Port Arthur by assault. In addition, his army was anxious to make the attempt. They had been successful against the same enemy throughout the advance. To have to take the position by siege was repugnant to their conception of how the thing should be done. It was their dearest wish to be allowed to take the fortress by assault. The rapid manner in which the closing-in movement about the eastern fort-ridge was executed, leaving as it did strong advance works in rear of the advance lines, was essential to the success of the plan. A more extensive préparatory work would have disclosed the great strength of the position, and would thereby have minimised the chances of a successful assault. This was amply shown by the conduct of the same troops later on in the siege, when they learned by bitter experience how strong the place really was. The conduct of the Japanese infantry, especially that of the ninth division in the successful assaults upon the two Panlung forts and the unsuccessful attempt to capture the Wantai Hill, was worthy of the greatest admiration.

It is doubtful whether the full extent of the

tragic results of the general assault was known until the following day. The great number of machine guns used by the Russians, and the exceedingly clever manner in which they were worked in conjunction with the starlight shells and searchlights, resulted in an enormous number of casualties. The usefulness of searchlights in naval operations at sea has always been admitted, but their use by an army in land operations has always been scouted by critics. Whether upon the whole they benefit the enemy more than the army which uses them, is a moot question, but upon the night of this first assault upon the fortress position at Port Arthur they certainly had their uses. The whole question as to how they were to be used had evidently been well thought out. It was only after the fall of the place that I discovered what really lay behind the usefulness of the searchlights. It was not their use so much as their skilful use. The ground in front of the fortress position was of course well known, and every possible range carefully ascertained. With powerful searchlights, for instance, throwing their rays over the Shuishi Valley from east to west, so that the light shafts converged, it was a comparatively easy matter for the men who manned the machine guns upon the eastern fortridge, directly in front of where those light rays converged, to locate range points. From an ascertained point thus located, by a system of signals, the lights carefully covered the level of the valley to another range point, which was similarly located. Anything that was lighted up between these two points became an object of fire from the machine guns directly in front, and not behind the lights. The Japanese

admit that they suffered terribly during that night attack from the deadly work of the Russian machine guns, but they will not admit that the searchlights had anything to do with it. On the contrary, they maintain that they received greater benefits from the lights than the Russians, as they illumined the ground to be advanced over during night attacks. It is astonishing, if this is the case, that they did not attack oftener during the night after their experience on the 23rd of August. Though many of their subsequent attacks upon the fortridges were continued after night-fall, there is not more than one or two isolated instances of their beginning an attack after dark, and not a single instance was there of anything approaching a general assault taking place when the searchlights could be used to locate advancing infantry. Another remarkable feature noticeable in this attack was the absence of machine guns with the investing army. It is true they had a few, but the Russians had ten to one. Later on in the siege they had more, because a large number were captured, but at the beginning it was noticeable how few machine guns were to be found upon the Japanese side.

CHAPTER XII

The aftermath of the tragedy, and the atmosphere of gloom which pervaded the army—A night attack during a thunderstorm—The change in plans, and the beginning of siege operations—What holding the Panlung forts meant—A visit to the East Panlung fort.

AN atmosphere of gloom pervaded the entire army when the full measure of the disaster which attended the final attempt to carry the enemy's position by storm became known the following day. Even the siege artillery, which had for days made the fortress belt an inferno of bursting shells, was strangely quiet. It seemed as though the catastrophe had paralysed the faculties of both officers and men. Before the assault the camp had been a scene of enthusiastic activity. The men had gone about their duties with light steps and smiling faces, for hopes ran high, and they were confident the end was near. A short twenty-four hours after, the whole scene was changed. All the buoyancy and activity had gone. The men moved about their duties with slow, dragging steps and sad and sober faces. Even the transport horses seemed to drag themselves along, as if in sympathy with the pervading atmosphere of gloom. And small wonder indeed that it was so, for the Angel of Death had laid a heavy hand upon the over-confident army of a few days before. A harvest of fifteen thousand killed and wounded had been reaped. Everywhere the field hospitals

were crowded far past their capacity with wounded and dying men, while out upon the slopes of the forthills there were hundreds more. Day and night the stretcher-bearers worked among the vast heaps of dead, searching for those in whose bodies the vital spark was still alive. Hundreds of wounded who had fallen in close proximity to the enemy's wire entanglements died from lack of attention, for the stretcher-bearers were fired upon when they approached too close to the Russian barricades. Men crawled into the advance trenches who had been lying for days among the dead far up the forthills. Night after night parties of rescuers, under cover of darkness to avoid rifle fire, crept from the trenches and brought back their wounded comrades, in many cases dragging them by the heels over zones of fire. The Red Cross flags, which the stretcher-bearers carried, were fired on again and again to my personal knowledge. The reason for this condition of affairs it was difficult to ascertain, but it was the beginning of the bitterest and most ferocious fighting the world has probably ever seen—fighting in which quarter was neither asked nor given on either side, and in which no flags of any kind were recognised. At Nanshan, the Russians claim, the trouble began with the slaughter of wounded in the trenches during the final charge when the hill was taken. The Japanese say that it began after the first assault upon the fortress position at Port Arthur, when their stretcher-bearers were fired upon whenever they approached the enemy's lines. Which side gave first cause for the abrogation of the rule that ought to obtain in all civilized warfare, that the life of a wounded

man is sacred, the world will probably never accurately know, for there were no unprejudiced witnesses at the Nanshan fight. Later in the siege both sides continually and persistently ignored the rule, with the result that for months wounded men on both sides were slaughtered in almost every engagement. Though their losses could only have been a small fraction of those sustained by the investing army, the Russians also seemed to recover slowly from the shock of the fierce and determined attack made upon their defences. Their inactivity did not last very long, however, for in a few days they were seen to be engaged day and night strengthening the enceinte to the higher ridge in rear of the East Panlung fort, where the Japanese had broken through, and in constructing a system of trenches upon the Wantai Hill.

The comparative quiet of the preceding two or three days and nights was broken about two o'clock on the morning of the 27th by a fusilade of rifle fire followed by a heavy bombardment. The night was dark, and a terrific thunderstorm was raging. Leaving the shelter of our tents at the foot of the Feng-hoang-shan mountain when the firing began, we clambered up its rain-soaked slopes, our way lighted every now and then by the flashing of forked tongues of lightning accompanied by peals of thunder which momentarily drowned the incessant booming of cannon and the rattle of rifle fire. The firing seemed to come from many points along the line of the enemy's centre. When we reached the crest of our observation post, the sight was one of the most wonderful and awe-inspiring imaginable. The enemy, under cover

of a fierce bombardment, was delivering a strong attack along the Japanese lines, and more particularly against the two captured Panlung forts. The incessant roaring of big guns was answered every now and then by a reverberating peal of thunder, while the flash of the guns and the flame from bursting shells were momentarily obliterated by flashes of forked lightning which illumined the whole scene. The medley of sounds was increased by the heavy rifle fire and the incessant working of machine guns and automatic quick-firers, while the weird element was contributed by the bursting of starlight shells and the flashing of the searchlights. This was war in which the elements were taking part. For an hour the firing continued with unabated fury, then gradually died away, until only a few of the big guns sobbed in occasional discharges, answered by the angry pealing of the thunder, while the vicious play of the lightning through the heavens lighted up the scene every few moments. The attack amounted to very little, for the Russians were easily driven back; but the scene while it lasted was one of the most magnificent which even the panoramic grandeur of war could produce.

It became evident at once, as soon as the army in a measure recovered from the depressing effects of the disastrous failure of the general assault, that there had been a complete change in the plan of operations. There was no longer any talk of continuing the series of forced charges by which it was first intended to take the fortress. Instead, the army quietly settled down to siege operations. The spirits of the survivors of the big assault were raised by the arrival of drafts from Japan with

which the various divisions were brought up to their normal strength. Gradually this influx of new life dissipated the gloom which hung over the camp. The new plan of operations involved a tremendous amount of hard work before any further extensive offensive move could be made. This also had a good effect in restoring the cheerfulness of the men. The rapid manner in which the investing army had closed in its lines about the fortress, in order to strike quickly in August, made the construction of proper trenches leading to the advance lines impossible. The investing line was also most irregular, owing to the failure of the army to capture some of the most important of the enemy's outlying advance works. In front of the eastern fortridge, after the capture of the Panlung forts, a peculiar situation existed. The investing line ran from the south coast between Ta-ku-shan and the fortridge and along the base of the foothills to the East Panlung fort, where it ran within a few hundred yards of the enceinte to the higher ridge in rear of the two captured forts. From there it ran out into the Shuishi Valley for nearly a mile in front of the Urhlung forts in a sort of triangular projection, at the apex of which was the uncaptured Urhlung redoubt, or Kuropatkin fort, which had successfully resisted furious attempts at capture. The line then ran back towards the entrance to the gorge of the Shuishi Valley between the east and west fortridges, where the Shuishi lunettes barred any further advance in that quarter. Upon the west flank the advance work upon 203 Metre Hill and the supporting works upon Namaokyama ridge prevented any closing-in movement against the forts west of Port Arthur. The new

plans involved the sapping up to all these advance works with a view to their capture. In addition it was decided to run saps up to the big East Keekwan Hill, the North Keekwan fort, and as near as possible to the two Urhlung forts. Even in this preliminary stage of reducing the outstanding advance works, the ultimate object of the plan was apparent. In front of the eastern fortridge it was obviously the intention to reduce the guarding forts upon the foothills of the western half of the ridge, from the big East Keekwan Hill to the western extremity, where the West Urhlung, or Sung-shu-shan, fort stands sentinel above the gorge of the Shuishi Valley between the east and west fortridges. The cleverness of this scheme was apparent after Port Arthur surrendered, when it was found that there was no secondary position possible behind the Wantai Hill, while at practically all other points upon the ridge secondary and supporting positions were possible. In addition, a short distance behind Wantai lay Port Arthur, which could be absolutely dominated from its crest and reverse slopes. Upon the west flank, 203 Metre Hill was obviously the key of the position, because with it must fall the Russian line of defence from it to the shores of Pigeon Bay, and from it again along a high ridge to the Chair Hills. Until this line was broken—and it could only be broken with advantage by the capture of 203 Metre Hill—the western forts were safe from close investment, and the fleet in the harbour from destruction. With 203 Metre Hill in their possession, not only could the Japanese guns dominate the harbour and the city, but the line of investment could be run close to the western forts, and communica-

tion between them and the city cut off, or rendered exceedingly difficult, even without the capture of any one of them. An understanding of this plan explains the reason why practically all the fighting during the siege took place in front of the western half of the eastern fortridge and 203 Metre Hill. There never was a sustained effort to even interfere by siege work with any one of the many strong forts east of the big East Keekwan Hill upon the eastern fortridge. Nor was there the slightest effort made to advance against any one of the permanent forts west of the city.

One of the most remarkable features of the siege was the splendidly tenacious manner in which the troops of the ninth division retained possession of the two Panlung forts. It is a question whether, from the standpoint of strategy and tactics, they were worth all the cost in life and almost superhuman exertions required to hold them; but they had been won at a tremendous price, and were all the investing army got out of its first desperate assault. Situated immediately under the heights of Wantai Hill, and closer to the enceinte than any other forts upon that section of the fortridge, they were deluged with rifle and shell fire by day, and the objects of the most desperate and determined attempts at recapture at night, for over a month, until the attention of the enemy was diverted from them by the near approach of sapping trenches to their line of defence. The forts were held after their capture by two companies of two hundred and fifty men each, with four machine guns each. The garrison of the East Panlung fort was taken from the seventh regiment of the sixth brigade, and the garrison of

the West Panlung fort from the thirty-sixth regiment of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division. The first work of the garrisons was to convert the sites of the former Russian forts into a series of trenches and bomb-proofs, and run connecting lines from the parallels in the Shuishi Valley to the defensive works upon the top of the forthill. Every day for three weeks the enemy's fortress artillery bombarded the forts, smashing the Japanese defences as fast as they were constructed, so that at night sortie parties might be able to gain access. In addition to repulsing these attempts at recapture, the garrisons were compelled to repair their broken trenches—all the time under both rifle and shell fire. They resorted to many clever expedients to mislead the enemy. Among others they constructed elaborate decoy trenches, which were of course immediately destroyed by the Russian artillery. With enormous labour these decoys were rebuilt every night, only to be again smashed the following day. As long as the enemy could be induced to destroy decoy trenches, the less obtrusive ones occupied by the troops enjoyed some immunity. In spite of this and every other expedient that could be thought of, the daily average casualty lists, from the time of their capture on the 22nd of August until the 10th of September, was one hundred in each fort. After the fall of Port Arthur, a trip to the crest of the Wantai Hill revealed the fact that, deep as the trenches were, the enemy from that point could see well into all of them, on account of the great height of the hill above the forts. Sections of the trenches leading to the front firing line at the rear of the fort were absolutely unsafe,

though they had been excavated to a depth of from ten to twelve feet. The desperate nature of the many attempts made by the Russians to recapture the forts is well illustrated by one which occurred before daylight on the morning of the 30th of August. A force of about two hundred of the enemy crept from their shelters behind the Chinese Wall, which at this point is only about one hundred and fifty yards from the first trench-line upon the fort, and attempted by a surprise attack to drive the Japanese out of the west fort. The garrison allowed the assaulters to come right up to the trench-wall and then opened upon them with rifles and machine guns. The main body retired immediately, but a small party of about twenty soldiers, led by a captain, pressed forward in spite of the awful fire, jumped into the Japanese trenches, and died to a man, fighting hand to hand. Quarter was neither asked nor offered. It was one of those occasions when both sides knew that death or success was the only alternative. This brave officer's sword, black with the life-blood of many Japanese soldiers, is one of the cherished possessions of General Nogi, who intends to have it placed in the Imperial Museum at Tokyo, with a story of the bravery of the officer who formerly owned it.

During the first week in September, after much persuasion, permission was obtained for a few of us to visit the East Panlung fort. We were warned by Army Headquarters that the way was a long and dangerous one, and that if we insisted upon making the visit we did so absolutely upon our own responsibility. Under a most uncomfortable shell fire from the enemy's forts we reached the head-

quarters of the ninth division, located in the dry watercourse which extends for almost the full length through the centre of the Shuishi Valley. The bivouacks of the Headquarters Staff nestled snugly under cover of the high river-bank out of sight of the enemy, while for a mile on either side were the reserve troops of the division. The camp was located in the dry bed of the river. Here we were comparatively safe, though the ground round about was literally torn into holes by bursting shells, and even in the camp itself were huge rents in the soil where 10 and 12-inch shells from Russian howitzers, fired at high angle, had exploded. The General of the division, Baron Oshima, received us most kindly. He was a thin, nervously alert man, somewhere about fifty years of age, and tall compared with the average officer. A better type of the Japanese aristocrat of the old school it would be impossible to find throughout the length and breadth of Japan. In feudal days he had been the daimio of the district from which a large percentage of the soldiers of his division are conscripted. That in itself gave him a standing with, and a control over, his soldiers which few of the ablest generals in the world could win with their commands. To fight for the Emperor, with their own former daimio to lead them, is an absolutely ideal condition to the soldier of Japan, and this fact doubtless has a great deal to do with the really wonderful record this division has won for itself in the fighting before Port Arthur. But apart from this consideration altogether, the man possessed a personality calculated to inspire men with confidence and devotion. Soldierly in appearance, despite his years the General looked, what he undoubtedly

is, one of those old school of downright fighting men who believe that the more like hell war is made the sooner it is over. Later, we heard stories about his bidding his friends farewell, and going to the front lines to lead his division in person, which convinced us that the appearance of the man did not belie his real character. With us he was more than ordinarily affable, gave us a simple soldier's tiffin, and, through an interpreter, talked with apparent frankness about the big fight in August. His division had been in the thick of it. They had captured the two Panlung forts, and penetrated the enceinte in rear to the slopes of the Wantai Hill. It had been awful fighting, in which only scattered dozens answered the roll-call out of whole regiments after the fight. The slopes of the forthill we were on our way to visit were still covered with the remains of brave men who had fallen in the assault, and whose bodies could not be recovered owing to the refusal of the enemy to recognise the Red Cross. It was evidently a most uncomfortable topic, for, despite his appearance of cheerfulness, one could see the shadows which recollection brought over the kindly face of the brave old General. The effect of searchlights and starlight shells, he was asked, upon advancing troops? Immediately the General's eyes flashed fire as he said emphatically, in Japanese, that his soldiers had no fear of either searchlights or starlight shells. Of course not, was replied, but were they not the cause of much of the heavy casualties which had been sustained? Yes, came the reluctant admission; they were at first, perhaps, until our soldiers learned to avoid the rays of the lights, and profit by the knowledge they gave of the

nature of the ground to be advanced over. What did play havoc with the assaulting troops, the General maintained, was the great number of machine and automatic quick-firing guns the enemy possessed, and the rapidity with which they were handled and shifted from place to place, so that it was exceedingly difficult to put them out of action. In his kindly manner the General warned us to be careful, even going through the trenches. One of his own followers had been killed the previous day while attending him on a trip to the fort. He detailed one of his staff officers to conduct us to the headquarters of the regiment which had taken, and was still holding, the fort. A long walk through well-constructed trenches brought us to the foot of the forthill and the headquarters of the regiment.

Almost the whole length of the wide parallel trench was lined with the bivouacks, or living quarters, of the supports of the garrison. During the daytime only a small number of men were required in the fort itself, but at night the supports reinforced the troops holding the trenches upon the top, so as to be ready to repel sorties or attempts at recapture under cover of darkness. More than half the width of the wide trench was taken up with a long row of these shelter tents of bivouacks of the soldiers. Each man carries with him on active service, in his knapsack, a small waterproof sheet and some very light-jointed wooden poles, about half an inch in diameter. With these simple appliances a company of soldiers will utilize a bank of earth or the wall of a trench to make a lean-to roof, with the waterproof sheets upheld by the small jointed poles. Under protection

of one of these sheets three men can comfortably sleep out of the sun and rain. A second sheet makes the front wall of the improvised tents, which are abutted to one another, so that the interior is one long shelter, in which the men sleep with their heads to the back wall and their feet towards the front. If it is so desired, three or more men can put up a dividing sheet and have a shelter to themselves. Each man also carries a blanket with his kit, and these blankets are used in common by three or more, with the result that there are always more than enough to go round. In this manner the Japanese soldier, even in the front lines, secures protection from both the sun and the rain, and in a measure from cold also, in shelters made from what he carries upon his shoulders and in his knapsack. It was amazing how comfortable and clean were the quarters of these soldiers who were living within a few hundred yards of the enemy's firing line and over whose shelters shells and bullets were passing every second. Their food, consisting of boiled rice and some meat and vegetables occasionally, was brought to them through the trenches from the regimental kitchens in covered tin pots, so that it was still warm when eaten. Water was also carried up to them for washing and drinking purposes. In this manner the men on duty in even the hottest places in the firing lines were supplied with hot food without having to light fires in their trenches. The closest examination of both the men and their quarters was convincing evidence that there are few soldiers in the world who know better how to take care of themselves, no matter where or how situated, than do the

Japanese. Most of the men were asleep when we were there, for theirs was a night duty, and an anxious one as well. Those we did see were not cheerful, contrary to what is usual with these soldiers in the field. Their faces wore a serious and painfully sad expression. We were ushered into a small, low bomb-proof, cut into the side of the trench-wall. This was the headquarters of one of the finest fighting regiments in the Japanese Army. The Colonel received us with quiet, affable hospitality. He was not cheerful. His face was the saddest I think I have ever seen. He had been one of the majors of the regiment who had survived the assault upon the fort and the counter-attack of the enemy upon the night of the 23rd of August. An injudicious question as to the number of the original regiment now left, caused the shadows to deepen upon his face as he replied sadly that there were only a few now. Their losses had been very heavy, he was sorry to say, and those who had been spared had not yet recovered their spirits. A young sub-lieutenant was detailed to take us up to the fort. He had been one of the officers who, upon the afternoon of the successful assault upon the fort, had replanted the regimental flag upon the corner of the trench-wall after it had been shot down by the enemy. Seriously wounded in the attempt, he had been taken to hospital, and had only the day before rejoined the regiment.

As we made our ways up the zig-zag trenches against which Russian bullets were pattering with an ugly vicious ping, we began to realize painfully that the trenches had been cut literally through a shambles. The stench was enough, even if the

suppuration from dead bodies in an advanced stage of decomposition had not made itself evident through the trench-walls. The scene in the transformed Russian fort bespoke the awful struggle which had taken place there. Scarcely a trace of the original structure was left, except here and there battered, filth-covered Russian bomb-proofs and dismantled battered cannon, buried deep in earth and débris, thrown from the deep lines of trenches which formed a network upon the top of the hill. The day previous the enemy had bombarded the fort for hours, with the result that a great breach thirty feet wide had been made in the front trench-wall of sand-bags. As we proceeded over the crest of the forthill the sub-lieutenant informed us of this fact, and said we would have to run for it across a narrow zone of fire where we would be in plain view from the enemy's firing line a short hundred yards away. As we ran, the bullets zipped past us and buried themselves in the sand-bags of which the outer trench-wall was constructed. Slowly and carefully we made our way to the first firing line through trenches, from the walls of which were sticking pieces of broken rifles, twisted bayonets, remnants of clothing, and all sorts of débris, just as they had been thrown with the earth when the trenches, were cut through the battle-ground inside the fort immediately after its capture. The breach in the first line of defences made it possible to see a long line of sand-bags about fifty yards in front across a small ravine. This was the enemy's firing line behind the old Chinese Wall, the enceinte to the higher fortridge. Through a small peep-hole we could see an occasional Russian

dodge quickly round the corner of a traverse wall as Japanese bullets tore the sand-bags all about him with angry spits. It was certainly a warm corner for rifle fire, and must have been a perfect inferno when shell fire was also turned upon the fort. Still the soldiers on duty in the first line stuck stolidly to their small loopholes, so intent upon business that they did not even notice our presence. They were there to shoot Russians, and were tremendously in earnest. A short time was enough for all of us in this place. Returning, we again had to run the gauntlet of fire across the short bit of exposed trench. Fortunately there were no accidents, and we retraced our steps to the headquarters of the regiment at the foot of the hill, where we were shown the small regimental flag which had played so important a part in the successful assault upon the fort on the 22nd of August. It was bullet-riddled and stained with the life-blood of several officers who had planted and planted it after it had first been shot down by the enemy on that eventful day.

No one who saw those serious-looking, sad-faced soldiers upon the East Panlung fort, bravely defending the hill they had captured from an equally brave and stubborn enemy, its slopes covered with the bodies of hundreds of their comrades-in-arms who had paid the price of their bravery almost a month before, will ever forget the tragedy of it all.

CHAPTER XIII

The arrival of reinforcements, and the attitude of the reservist towards the service he was called upon to render—How a regiment of second reserves was punished for showing the white feather—The weakest spot in the Japanese military establishment, and the reasons for it—The beginning of the extensive use of the dynamite hand-grenades, and their awful effects in the sapping trenches.

DURING the last days of August and the first days of September, somewhere about sixteen thousand reinforcements from Japan arrived in front of Port Arthur, and were at once drafted into the front lines to fill up the sadly-decimated ranks of the investing army. These new troops were mainly composed of second reserves, that is, men who had already served a three years' term in the regular army and had not yet completed a further service of five years in the reserve army. The first regiment of these reinforcements arrived by train from Dalny early on the morning of the 28th of August, and was marched from the railway station at Chang-ling-tzu into camp, headed by the Tokyo Cadet band, which had come to the front in order to play martial and national music to the wounded in the hospitals. The men presented a striking contrast, in their new khaki uniforms and equipments, to the mud-stained, sunburned veterans of the earlier fighting. As regiment after regiment arrived in camp, one had a good opportunity of studying the men and their mental attitude towards the task which lay ahead of them in

working sapping trenches up the blood-stained slopes of the fortridge, where so many of their comrades-in-arms had bitten the dust a few weeks before. It is difficult in the reserves of any army to find that enthusiastic unanimity of desire to serve which is to be found in the younger men who make up a regular army, and which is such a marked characteristic of the soldiers of Japan. This is only natural, for when a man has served his country for three years in a regular army during his youth, when he is in a sense unattached and without strong home ties and business interests, there is an enthusiastic abandon about the service he renders which could scarcely be expected from the same man three or four years later, when in nine cases out of ten he has a wife and family and business interests which, in addition to his more mature age, tie him more closely to home. With all these considerations fully in mind, it was interesting to study the attitude of these reserve troops towards the work the law of conscription compelled them to do. Generally speaking, it was remarkable how cheerful the men appeared, despite the fact that a great majority of them wore the Imperial medal for the Chino-Japanese war and were men of matured years who knew all that active service meant, and in addition had come to serve their Emperor notwithstanding strong ties of family and business interests at home. There were very many cases, however, where it was plainly evident that these troops regarded the service they were called upon to give in the light of a duty rather than a privilege. They lacked that cheerful enthusiasm and willingness to risk all and work under any discomforts which one

Soldiers of the 9th Regiment Asaka Reserves erecting Camp Shelters in rear of the Lines.

noticed so markedly in the younger soldiers of the regular army of Japan.

It was immediately after the arrival of these new troops that we saw an entire Japanese regiment retired from the fighting lines for showing the white feather, and whipped with the lash of disgrace and scorn to such an extent that they finally petitioned to be placed in the fighting lines again and given another chance. It was during the closing-in operations of the army that the incident occurred. One of the independent infantry brigades was ordered to attack the lunettes at the entrance to the gorge of the Shuishi Valley between the east and west fortridges on the 20th of August. This brigade was composed of second reserve men from the Osaka military district. One of the regiments, the ninth regiment of second reserves from Osaka, refused to leave the cover of their trenches when the assault was ordered. Their officers were furious, and the Major in command was shot down through exposing himself to the enemy's fire in frantic efforts to induce his unwilling regiment to go forward. When the general assault, which followed immediately after the attack upon the lunettes, was over, and their presence could safely be dispensed with, the defaulting regiment was sent into camp in rear of the lines, quite close to our quarters at the foot of the Feng-hoang-shan mountain. The men were not allowed to remain in idleness,—in fact, they were compelled to do more manual labour than any of the other soldiers in the army. Many were taken by the non-combatant officers to do servants' work. They were constituted hewers of wood and drawers of water, and completely isolated from the rest of the

army as if they were infected with some contagious disease. Late and early every day they were put through field movements, and compelled to march and charge over the roughest ground and up the steepest hill-slopes. A Shinto shrine was erected upon the side of a hill in rear of their camp to the departed spirit of the Major who had lost his life when they won their disgrace, and every day, by sections or companies, the regiment was marched up to the shrine to pay homage, and listen to long dissertations upon the splendid quality of bravery possessed by their slaughtered commander. Never were troops put through a more drastic and humiliating course of punishment. For six or eight weeks this continued, until the regiment petitioned to be sent to one of the armies operating in the northern part of the peninsula, and given another chance in the fighting line.

The conduct of this regiment was visible evidence of the existence of one very weak spot in the Japanese military establishment, a weakness which I closely investigated while waiting in Japan for permission to proceed to the front. During the Chino-Japanese war the troops conscripted from what is known as the Osaka military district, which includes the commercial metropolis of Osaka, the former capital city of Kyoto, the great silk manufacturing centre of Otsu and the country round about these great centres, earned a most unenviable reputation for lack of courage. In investigating the reasons for this lack of proper military courage, among the men conscripted from this particular military district, I succeeded, after much difficulty, in extracting the skeleton from the carefully guarded closet. Away up among the

mountains close to the shores of Lake Biwa, about equal distance from the three large cities of the district, there is an ancient Shinto shrine which Japanese mythology insists was erected at the order of the Empress Jingo. Immediately before starting upon a successful invasion of Korea at the head of her army—for this Empress was the Joan d'Arc of Japan—she is supposed to have petitioned before the shrine for a safe return in order that she might give birth to her son, the future Emperor. This shrine is called Motorogi, and is almost inaccessibly located among the hills far from the beaten track of tourists. Immediately before, and during, the Chino-Japanese war, men belonging to the district eligible for conscription began to resort to this ancient shrine, and pay homage to the saint supposed to be enshrined there in the hope of escaping conscription. This was the medium through which the anti-military spirit of the district found vent, and the use to which this ancient shrine was being put came to be well known throughout the Empire. In spite of the fact that personal investigation showed me that Motorogi was still being popularly used immediately before and during the present war, it did look at the beginning as if the Osaka district troops were determined to wipe away the stigma of disgrace which attached to their reputations as soldiers in the eyes of the rest of the nation. Given one of the ablest divisional commanders to lead them, the Osakas did splendid work at the battle of Nanshan. Again, a small command of troops from the same district, with true orthodox Japanese bravery, went down with their transport, the *Kinshu Maru*, off the coast of Korea, near Gensan,

when she was attacked by the warships of the Vladivostock squadron, rather than surrender. But at Port Arthur the anti-military spirit again outcropped among these same troops, and blasted the hopes of those Japanese who fondly believed that the stain upon their national escutcheon as a military nation was destined to be wiped out. The reason for the existence of this spirit among the soldiers taken from the Osaka military district is to be found in the demoralizing effect the cultivation of the arts and sciences, and the consequent acquisition of considerable worldly wealth, has upon the martial spirit of the people. Osaka, as the commercial metropolis and a great manufacturing centre, has an enormous industrial class who earn wages and work in factories. The ancient capital, Kyoto, has always been the centre of Japanese art. Like the people of most such centres, the inhabitants of Kyoto have acquired a certain moral laxity and effeminacy. The city of Otsu is populated almost entirely by skilled silk workmen. Every regiment raised in the district has a large percentage of people from these cities among its rank and file.

If the effect of civilizing influences and the acquisition of worldly wealth upon the Japanese nation generally can be inferred from the results in the Osaka military district, it is obvious that the Japanese Army is now at its very best as a fighting force. At the present time the army is made up of men, the vast majority of whom are almost as primitive in their habits and modes of life as they were before the influences of Western civilization were felt in the country. They are farmers and fishermen for the most part, who not only

live out of doors the greater part of the time, but are compelled to work extremely hard to earn enough for their modest needs. The farmers of Japan even to-day, for instance, till the soil in practically the same primitive manner and with the same crude tools used in the country a century ago. Their lives are those of unremitting toil and rigid frugality. One has only to see the enormous fleets of fishing-junks off the coasts in all kinds of weather, winter and summer, to get a conception of the hard, dangerous, and laborious life led by the fishermen of the country, who make up a very large proportion of the population. They have what might be called the very quintessence of patriotism in their splendid devotion to their Emperor, which possibly they may never wholly lose; but, after the present war, when the nation will be compelled to take its place as a military power whether it ultimately wins or loses in the war, the trade of the country is bound to increase, and with it the national wealth. In addition, the people are bound to feel more and more the very same influences which are now being felt in the Osaka military district. Japan is now in what might be termed the first stage of a process of national social transition. Her army combines the strength of the past and the present, inasmuch as it has acquired a knowledge of modern Western methods of warfare without losing its primitive strength born of the hard and laborious life led by the men who make up its rank and file in times of peace. Though they are now led by born warriors in the Samurai officers, the soldiers, it must be remembered, had never been fighting men at all until about a quarter of a century ago.

They were good material with a splendid incentive and spirit, and in the hands of the Samurai officers, who possess the best qualities of good soldiers, have done marvellously well; but these officers are being rapidly killed off in the present war, and the coming generation of officer in Japan is not the same as the present generation is, or the past has been. The further the process of social transition goes the less of the strength of the past the army will possess, and the more it will be subject to the demoralizing influences which led to the downfall of the ancient Roman and Grecian Empires as military powers. Upon the strength of the nation generally, to resist and rise superior to those influences, depends the future of the Japanese Army as a fighting force.

The most diabolically inhuman feature of the fighting in front of Port Arthur was the incessant and extensive use of dynamite hand-grenades, which was quickly followed by the contrivance of wooden mortar guns by which heavily charged dynamite shells or bombs were projected, as far as four hundred and four hundred and fifty yards, into the trenches and positions occupied by the opposing forces. It has been said that the use of these grenades in the present war was a return to primitive methods. There was a time, of course, when black powder grenades were in common use with most of the European armies. The British Grenadier Guards derive their name from the fact that they formerly carried and used hand-grenades. But it is impossible for a moment to compare the grenade of former days with the similar diabolical engine of destruction so extensively used in the fighting before Port Arthur.

From time to time for many years the civilized world has been shocked by stories of the successful results of Nihilistic plots in Russia by which high State dignitaries, and in one instance the Czar himself, have been blown into the next world by the explosion of dynamite bombs, usually thrown at the carriages in which the intended victims of the conspiracies of these Nihilistic organizations have been seated. Recalling the destruction wrought by the explosion of a single bomb thus thrown, one is able to get some small conception of what it meant to have two large armies using a very similar article as an offensive weapon in the hands of soldiers. By common consent of all civilized nations, in order to humanize as far as possible the awful game of war, the use of bullets which expand upon impact has been prohibited, because, in addition to putting the soldier hit by them out of action, they inflicted wounds of a most unnecessarily painful character, which more often than not made the victims who survived cripples for life. But there is absolutely no comparison between the effect of expanding bullets, even if used exclusively by an army, and the terrible results of the extensive use of dynamite grenades in the hands of soldiers of opposing forces. It is bad enough to see a battlefield covered with dead. There is sufficient tragedy in reading the story of a desperate fight to the finish at close quarters over some section of a trench-line, for instance, in the piles of bodies of brave men who have died fighting with the bayonet. But to see the slopes of a hill, acres in extent, literally covered with the scattered remnants of what were once soldiers, is adding to the game of war a new

and awful horror it never before possessed. The slopes of 203 Metre Hill, after its capture by the Japanese, were more like the interior of a slaughter-house than like the battlefield where the forces of two civilized nations strove for possession. There were thousands of dead,—trench-lines piled high with them,—but far too many were not the bodies of dead decently killed by either rifle or bayonet. Instead, one saw huge piles of odds and ends of humanity gathered from all quarters, a leg here, an arm there, and so on. Most of these bodies, or portions of bodies, were stark naked, because every article of clothing had been literally blown from them by the force of the explosions. All this, and much more that one cannot tell, were the results of the extensive use, in a fight which lasted for days, of these dynamite grenades.

The use of high explosives in this form one would naturally conclude to be an expedient resorted to, at first in any event, by the Russian troops ; but here again it was impossible to obtain any accurate information as to who was the first offender. The Russians claim that high explosive grenades were first used by the Japanese in the defence of the crest of Kenzan, in the first fight during the advance towards Port Arthur, after the battle of Nanshan. The Japanese state, on the contrary, that they were first used by the Russians during the successful assaults upon the two Panlung forts in August. One thing is certain, if the Japanese did begin their use, they were exceedingly short-sighted, and paid a most awful price for their breach of the usages of civilized warfare, for, as the assaulters of strong defensive works in every instance, they suffered infinitely

more than the defenders of those works. To those of us who watched the fighting before Port Arthur from first to last, it was evident that both the attacking and defending armies resorted to the extensive use of dynamite, in the form of a projected missile, used by troops simultaneously, and vied with each other in making them more and more destructive in their character, and in inventing devices to use them at longer ranges than they could be projected by hand. Though no doubt they were used in the successful assault upon the Panlung forts in August, it was only later on, when the Japanese sapping trenches began to approach close to the enemy's defensive works, that dynamite grenades began to be used to any great extent. The first wooden bomb-mortar, for projecting them a greater distance than they could be thrown by hand, was used by the Russians upon the East Urhlung forthill against the sapping trenches of the investing army. The Japanese were, however, quick to adopt the idea. The workshops of their engineering corps in rear of the lines became busy at once, and in a few weeks hundreds of these wooden bomb-guns were in use along the whole of the fighting lines.

The amount of hard and dangerous work the troops of the investing army did during the first weeks in September the world will never know. The enemy, knowing full well the inevitable results of sapping operations against even the strongest of their defensive works, desisted from their determined efforts to dislodge the Japanese from the two captured Panlung forts, and concentrated all their efforts to prevent the progress of sapping

operations. All day long the fortress artillery bombarded the new lines of trenches, plainly visible from the lines of fresh earth thrown up, despite the cover which the waving fields of koliang afforded. Almost every night there were sorties of the most desperate and daring character. The long lines of Chinese coolies, conveying stretchers from the field to the stationary hospitals in rear of the lines, told a pathetic story of the results of these sorties made under the cover of darkness. But the most awful evidences were never seen, for the dynamite bombs thrown by the enemy into the heads of the sapping trenches too often did their deadly work so well that shattered fragments of the men who composed the working parties were all that remained. Only those who were wounded came back, the remains of the others were quickly disposed of upon the spot. They were dreary awful days those first weeks in September, when a sudden furious rifle fire in the dead of night meant a sanguinary encounter at the head of some trench-line, which generally ended in a tragedy. In the darkness it all happened, without witnesses to tell of the deeds of bravery and the awful scenes which took place. All that one could see was the long line of stretcher-bearers each morning, threading their way out through the Feng-hoang-shan foothills to the stationary hospitals. What those long lines of stretchers bore everyone knew only too well who had ever paid a visit to the hospitals. More often than not they carried the shattered remnants of men torn by shells or shattered by dynamite bombs, from whose almost unrecognizable bodies the sparks of vitality had not yet departed. As the sapping

trenches approached closer to the enemy's strongholds the bombardment became fiercer by day and the sorties more frequent and determined by night, while each morning the long lines of wounded being brought to the hospitals in rear grew longer. To the spectator even, who was not vitally concerned in the game, these were days filled with silent tragedy.

CHAPTER XIV

The beginning of active offensive operations against the enemy's advance works—The capture of the Urhlung redoubt—The successful assault upon the Shuishi lunettes—The capture of Namaokyama ridge, and the series of unsuccessful assaults upon 203 Metre Hill.

THE army had toiled, in spite of the excessive heat, for nearly a month excavating zig-zag sapping trenches towards the enemy's advance works and constructing siege parallels at proper intervals as the trenches progressed, before it was decided to resume active offensive operations. Though at first the newspaper correspondents had a most uncomfortable time with the army, the time came when the staff officers began to place some little trust in our good intentions. Not only was the systematic espionage upon all our comings and goings about the lines relaxed, but on the morning of the 17th of September we were summoned to Army Headquarters, given a brief résumé of what had been accomplished during the month's sapping operations, and, to our utter amazement, informed about the future plans and what was expected from them. Three lines of sapping trenches had been run up to within one hundred and fifty yards of the Urhlung redoubt,—one from the west, a second from the east, and a third towards the trenches connecting the advance work with the Urhlung forts. In the gorge of the Shuishi Valley the advance parallel trench was within fifty yards of the most northerly of the lunettes which blocked

the entrance. The troops of the first division had also been busy upon the left flank front. The advance works of the enemy upon 203 Metre Hill had developed great strength. They not only occupied the crest of a lofty hill, but the position was protected upon the north front by the long high ridge known as Namaokyama, which was strongly fortified. Sapping trenches had been pushed up the north-west slopes of 203 Metre Hill within a short distance of the wire entanglements close to its base; while upon the north-east slopes of Namaokyama the saps were within thirty-five yards of the entanglements. Good progress had also been made in approaching some of the permanent forts upon the eastern fortridge. Against the high East Keekwan Hill the trenches had reached the first lines of wire entanglements a short way up the slope. Towards the North Keekwan fort they were within sixty yards of the entanglements upon the north front of the forthill. The work of sapping against the East Urhlung fort had been pushed as far as it had been deemed wise until the Urhlung redoubt was captured. Two days later it was the intention to attack simultaneously the Urhlung redoubt, the Shuishi lunettes, Namaokyama ridge, and the advance work upon 203 Metre Hill. The attacks would be preceded by a heavy bombardment, and accompanied by infantry demonstrations against the eastern half of the eastern fortridge.

Early upon the morning of the 19th, according to the pre-arranged plans, there was a heavy bombardment from the Japanese guns along the entire front. The enemy's artillery failed to reply for several hours, and the infantry attacks, which

were planned to take place early in the afternoon, were delayed several hours. Between two and three o'clock the Russian guns began to respond, and for a couple of hours there was a heavy artillery duel. Expecting that the fiercest fighting would take place upon the west flank, in the attempts to take Namaokyama ridge and 203 Metre Hill, we made our way during the morning to the headquarters of the first division, located upon the steep slopes of 131 Metre Hill, taken from the Russians early in August. The hill was high enough to afford a splendid view of Namaokyama and a portion of 203 Metre Hill from the trenches upon its crest, while from an old Russian bomb-proof upon its south-east front a fairly good view could be obtained of the fighting in front of the Shuishi lunettes and the Urhlung redoubt. The distance from the crest of the hill to Namaokyama ridge was only about two thousand yards, so that even the smallest details of the fighting there could be plainly seen through field-glasses. The first movement of the infantry was made by the troops of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division, advancing against the Urhlung redoubt from three points, under one of the most wonderful bombardments imaginable. There were a good many instances of excellent concentrated artillery fire during the siege, but there was not a better example than this. For twenty minutes before the infantry attacks began, the Russian advance work looked like the crater of an active volcano from the deluge of bursting shrapnel and common shell poured into it. When this shell fire was at its hottest the infantry emerged from their parallels at three points. Upon the west the independent infantry

Headquarters of 1st Division, from which the fight for possession of Namaokyama and 203 Metre Hill were directed.

brigade advanced up the slopes of the knoll upon which the work was located and assaulted its west front. Upon the east two battalions of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division advanced from their trenches and attacked the trench-line in rear of the redoubt. The main attack, however, was made against the north-west front, where two more battalions of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division made a furious charge up the slopes of the knoll, which were very steep at this point, and gained the crest. They were met with a most awful rifle fire from the bomb-proofed trenches inside the redoubt. It came in volleys which nothing could withstand. Back the assaulters were forced to their trenches at the foot of the knoll. Meantime the troops upon the west front had also attacked. They were met with a similar fire, and came under it much sooner owing to the conformation of the ground. They were also repulsed with heavy losses. The attack upon the east trench-line was absolutely futile, as the assaulters had to advance over level ground. They started but were unable to go far. Repulsed at all three points, the attackers kept up a heavy rifle fire from their trenches, and waited cover of night to continue the assaults. Meantime the artillery kept up a heavy bombardment, and just before dark succeeded in making a breach in the walls of the redoubt at the north-east corner.

While this attack was in progress, just before dark, a heavy concentrated shrapnel fire against the four lunettes at the entrance to the gorge of the Shuishi Valley indicated that an attack was about to be made in that quarter. In order to understand the fight which took place here it is

necessary to explain the strength and peculiar form of the Russian works. The lunettes were four in number, built so as to form a hollow square with connecting trenches between them upon three sides, the rear towards Port Arthur being open. These advance works, with their connecting trench-lines, formed a strong defence line practically across the entrance to the gorge of the valley, and commanded any approach towards the city over the low ground between the east and west fortridges. The two most northerly of the lunettes were about three or four hundred yards south of the village of Shuishi, and the second two were immediately in rear and distant about three hundred yards. Roughly speaking, the front presented by the most northerly of the advance works and their connecting trench-line was about five hundred yards. The four lunettes were distinguished by letters, the most northerly upon the west side being called "B," the one immediately in rear "A," while the most northerly upon the east side was known as "D," and the one immediately in rear of it "C." The largest and strongest was "B," which measured some ninety feet across the front. Extending from "B" to "D" there was a line of bomb-proof trenches with a deep moat or ditch about twelve feet across. From "B" and "D," extending southwards to the other two lunettes, there were also trench-lines, but much less strongly protected, though they had deep ditches in front of them. It was the strongest of these advance works which had been attacked upon the 20th of August and carried by a fierce assault, only to be evacuated because of the enormous contributing strength of the other works. The parallel trenches

from which the attack was to be made this time had been run up to within fifty yards of the moat which extended along the north front. The assault was made in the dim light of evening, a battalion and a half advancing against the " B " and two companies against the " D " lunette. The water ditch was reached and scaling ladders thrown across to make passage, but the enemy's fire was so heavy that the difficult approaches could not be negotiated, and both assaults were repulsed with heavy losses.

It was about half-past five o'clock in the afternoon when the bursting of Japanese shrapnel over Namaokyama ridge and 203 Metre Hill gave warning that the advance of the infantry was about to begin. The practice of the gunners was excellent. From end to end of the high ridge, which was fully three hundred yards, the clouds of bursting shrapnel and common shell swept directly over the double lines of trenches upon the Russian position. Just before the sun went down the advance of the infantry came from the sapping trenches at the extreme north-east corner of the ridge over a low neck between the slopes and a small hill directly to the north, which was held by the Japanese. First, half a dozen pioneers emerged quickly from the parallels, and, amid a perfect storm of bullets, ran across the low neck towards a small patch of dead ground below the enemy's first trench-line. Two out of the half-dozen reached the spot, and waved a signal to the troops on the other side. A moment later a dozen soldiers led by an officer did the perilous trip across the zone of fire. Then a dozen more followed. A larger number then started across, led by an officer with his naked sword uplifted.

The Russian rifles blazed from the trenches above, and the assaulters went down in dozens. The officer, well ahead of his men, with his sword glittering in the sunlight, was a conspicuous mark. The ground about him was literally torn with bullets. He halted in his mad rush, evidently wounded, then started again, and turned round to wave on his men, when a bullet found him in a vital spot, for he went down in a heap. Then I saw the first instance of unfairness on the part of the Russians. As the wounded officer lay I saw the bullets tear the ground all about him. He tried to drag himself to cover. There was another cloud of dust raised by bullets, and he turned upon his back evidently dead. By this time his men had reached the spot, and carried his body on with them. This incident came back to me the following day, when I saw scores of Russians bayoneted in their trenches upon the crest of the ridge. Some of them, it was afterwards claimed, were wounded men; but it was hard to blame the soldiers who slew them in the heat of battle, remembering the treatment meted out to their own officer the previous day. There were more rushes of men across the neck, and when darkness closed in two companies had found shelter upon the slopes under the enemy's trenches. At the same time this advance was going on, the pioneers of the regiment which occupied the parallels upon the north-west slopes of 203 Metre Hill succeeded in making a breach in the wire entanglements in front of the enemy's first line of trenches.

During the night there was an awful double battle in progress in the Shuishi Valley, in front

of the Shuishi lunettes and the Urhlung redoubt. Foiled in their first attempt to capture the redoubt, the troops of the ninth division resumed their efforts as soon as darkness covered their movements. Reinforced by the battalions which during the afternoon had unsuccessfully assaulted the east trench-line, the force upon the north-east front twice delivered furious attacks upon the enemy's position with the object of gaining an entrance through the breach made in the walls by the artillery fire of the afternoon. Both attempts ended in failure, and for a time it looked as though the advance work would be able to resist all attempts made to capture it. Finally, just before dawn, attacks were made upon the west and north-east fronts. Infuriated by their many failures and heavy casualties, the assaulters crowded the ditch in front of the breach in the walls. They suffered horribly from dynamite grenades thrown at them from the Russian trench-lines above, but this time they succeeded in effecting an entrance, only to be met with a furious rifle and machine-gun fire from loopholed casemates, which had to be carried one by one at the point of the bayonet, after having been first smashed by dynamite bombs. The garrison, out-numbered two or three to one, met these rushes bayonet in hand and fought like demons, only retiring to the trench-lines in rear when further resistance was impossible. The redoubt captured, the successful Japanese pursued the retiring enemy along the three lines of trenches leading to the foot of the Urhlung forts. It was a little after dawn when the flag of the Rising Sun floated proudly from the top of the small advance work, which in three assaults

had cost the investing army between four and five thousand casualties. The work was an exceedingly strong one, and was surrounded by a moat the perpendicular walls of which were twenty-five feet from the lower level to the top of the walls. Upon the inside, immediately behind the ramparts, were infantry trenches loopholed and with good head-cover from artillery fire. The work mounted three field guns, which were captured, and a number of machine guns. The field guns were in protected emplacements and the machine guns were in loopholed casemates, which were large enough to hold strong firing lines of infantry as well. The garrison consisted of two companies of infantry with two more companies guarding the connecting trench-lines. During all the assaults dynamite grenades were freely used upon both sides. Two fully mounted and equipped torpedo-tubes from some of the warships, with a quantity of fish torpedoes, were found in the redoubt, though they do not appear to have been used at all by the garrison. Immediately after its capture the advance work was completely destroyed by fire and explosives, so that there would be no danger of the enemy ever again being able to recapture and occupy it.

The troops of the first division in the meantime were having an equally hard time endeavouring to secure possession of the Shuishi lunettes. Twice during the night they had made furious assaults, only to be repulsed in every quarter. About daylight upon the morning of the 20th, just after the Urhlung redoubt had been captured by the ninth division, the entire attacking force was combined in an assault upon the strongest of the lunettes. Hundreds of bamboo scaling ladders

were carried by the pioneers, and with these bridges were made across the water moat. In the face of an awful rifle fire, and the still more awful deluge of dynamite bombs thrown by the garrison, the assaulters succeeded in gaining a foothold inside the advance work. Still the garrison fought stubbornly, but were finally overpowered and compelled to retire into the trench-lines leading to the other lunettes. This time the Japanese did not commit the mistake which compelled them to evacuate the work when it had been won in August. The very moment the Russians retired they were followed up before they could get the machine guns located in the trench-lines to work. One hour after the first lunette had been won, the Japanese were in possession of the whole system of advance works, including the four lunettes and all the connecting trench-lines. The casualties among the assaulting troops were about four hundred. The casualties of the garrisons could not be ascertained, but must have been considerable, owing to the amount of bayonet work which took place immediately after the first work was captured, and the great number of dynamite grenades used. The Russians had a force of a thousand men in the advance works and connecting trenches. The "B" lunette mounted one field gun, two automatic quick-firers and three machine guns. The "D" lunette had no guns, but was heavily garrisoned by infantry. The "C" lunette had one field gun and two mortars, and the "A" lunette one automatic quick-firer and one machine gun. The machine guns in the trench-lines were taken away by the enemy, but all the others were captured in a more or less damaged condition.

Up to this time nothing had been accomplished upon the Namaokyama ridge or 203 Metre Hill. With the first peep of dawn on the morning of the 20th, the Japanese artillery began a bombardment of both positions, which was kept up most of the day. From the continual bringing forward of reinforcements it was evident that both places had developed an unexpected strength. During the afternoon we learned that it was the intention to vigorously attack the hill and the ridge simultaneously, and that there would be no cessation of the fighting until both were captured. One regiment had worked its way round the western flank of 203 Metre Hill under shelter of a low ridge which extends north and south between the hill and the west coast, and had run a line of sapping trenches to within about one hundred feet of the north-west slopes and the first line of wire entanglements in front of the trenches, which were a short distance up the slopes. From these trenches the attack was to be made, the pioneers having the previous evening succeeded in making a breach in the entanglements. The Namaokyama ridge was to be attacked from the vantage ground gained by the regiment we had watched advancing upon the north-east side the previous afternoon. A second regiment was to work up the very steep north slopes from a deep ravine as soon as the first regiment had begun the attack, so as to engage the enemy along the whole line of defence upon the crest of the ridge. The troops began to move from their parallels about half-past five o'clock in the evening. The assault upon 203 Metre Hill we could not see, but that upon the Namaokyama ridge was in plain view not more than two thousand

yards away. The advance was started by the company upon the north-east slopes. The first line of trenches half-way down the face of the ridge the enemy had evidently evacuated during the night, but the assaulters came under a heavy fire a few minutes after they started from the second line upon the crests, which were all the time smothered with shrapnel. Meantime a regiment was quickly filing across the low neck from the parallels, while a second was climbing the steep north slopes. When the advancing company neared the crest they were greeted with a heavy rifle fire. They had been advancing in company bodies without any regular order. The moment they came under fire these bunches of men spread out along the face of the ridge, and went up in single lines close order, while the supports worked along the steep face of the ridge under cover and took their places in the advancing line. Even before the whole regiment had extended in this manner the leading company nearest the north-east corner advanced towards the crest. The steepness of the slope, together with the fact that the Russians had their trench-line absolutely upon the crest instead of down the face of the hill where they could command the approach, gave the assaulters fairly good cover until they were within a few yards of the enemy's position. According to their usual splendid custom the Japanese succeeded by a magnificent artillery support in keeping down the Russian fire, so that practically all the fighting took place at close quarters with bayonets and dynamite grenades. The Russian infantry in the trenches rose to meet the assaulters at close quarters. Then followed one of the most wonderful spectacles imaginable. In the rapidly

fading daylight, silhouetted against the sky full upon the crest of the ridge, one could see long lines of men in desperate hand-to-hand encounters. The supports swarmed up the slopes farther to the west, and more troops clambered up the hill still farther west. In fifteen minutes after the advance started, the crest of the ridge for fully half its length was crowded with soldiers fighting hand to hand with bayonets and grenades. It was a sight to be seen once in a lifetime, but once seen could never be forgotten. Ten minutes of this desperate work there was, and then the Japanese were in possession of the enemy's line for half the length of the ridge. The trenches upon the other half were quickly evacuated, so that before six o'clock in the evening the entire position had been won. It was not a particularly strong one, and had been occupied principally to protect 203 Metre Hill from assault upon its north front. Along its front there were two lines of trenches, one about half-way up the slope and the other upon the crest. The lower was not protected in any way, but the upper was partly bomb-proofed at intervals along its entire length. The garrison consisted of five companies of infantry. Four field guns and two of heavier calibre were captured. The Japanese losses were some two hundred killed and wounded, while the enemy left one hundred and thirty dead upon the position. The following morning I saw three prisoners who had been taken in the trenches upon Namaokyama brought into camp. They were a captain, a non-commissioned officer, and a private. The captain and the private had been wounded, the former slightly and the latter seriously. The officer was a man of between

sixty and seventy years of age, and a splendid specimen of the father of his company type, common in the armies of the Czar. He was treated with great consideration by the Japanese officers, principally because of his age, for the Japanese have a profound veneration for age. When I saw him he was seated upon a bank of earth outside the bomb-proof in which, with the other prisoners, he was temporarily confined. Tall and well set up, with a long full grey beard, he was every inch a soldier in appearance, despite his great age. Seated with his head bowed upon his hands, he looked the picture of misery. Only occasionally he raised his eyes to look at the curious soldiers who crowded about to see the captured "Ruskie." This curiosity seemed to annoy the old man intensely. Finally he rose, and glaring about with a look of scorn and hate upon his face, which clearly indicated the spirit of intense animosity which existed between the two armies, sought the seclusion of the small bomb-proof.

All the advance works it was designed to capture during this series of attacks had now been won, except the one upon the crest of 203 Metre Hill, and here the Japanese met with repulse after repulse. Though they managed at one time to gain a portion of the position, they were driven out. For two days and two nights the fighting went on incessantly, until finally the attacking troops were forced to retire from their front trenches and give up the attempt. The first attack was made at the same time as the assault was made upon Namaokyama. A whole regiment advanced from the parallel trench, but before it reached the wire entanglements it was driven back by a most furious

rifle fire. Under cover of darkness the same night another attempt was made to rush the first trench-line of the enemy. The fight in the darkness lasted for over an hour. Again and again sections of the trench were taken, but just as often retaken. The slaughter was heavy on both sides, though the Japanese suffered most. With dawn the following morning the Japanese artillery began a bombardment of the hill, and all day its crest and slopes were deluged with shells. Just before dark a third attempt was made to gain the lower trench near the foot of the hill. Two hours' desperate fighting, principally with bayonets and grenades, gave the assaulters possession of a small section. The distance between the first and second lines of trenches was quite five hundred yards of tremendously hard climbing up the hillside, which could be literally swept with rifle fire. Under cover of darkness, from the vantage ground they had gained early in the evening, the Japanese worked their way up this steep escarpment to within easy charging distance of the upper line of trenches. A furious and well-sustained assault gave them a foothold, and from there a small body gained the crest of the hill. But they were not destined to hold their hard-won advantage for long. Having received reinforcements upon this portion of the hill, the Russians delivered a furious counter-attack, and swept the successful attackers down the slopes and through the lower trench-line into their own parallels. The fighting was bitter in the extreme. Afterwards I saw men wounded during this fighting who had their eyes gouged out and their faces smashed with stones and the butts of rifles. This was about the first exhibition of that awful ferocity

on both sides which marked all of the fighting from this time on. Probably never before have opposing troops shown such terrible antagonism, born of the bitterest hate. Upon the following morning the Russians concentrated the entire artillery fire upon the Japanese trenches at the foot of the hill. Not only were all the guns upon the hill itself brought to bear, but the fortress artillery upon the Itzeshan, An-tzu-shan, and Taiyangkow forts also assisted. No troops could live under such a bombardment, and towards noon upon the 22nd the Japanese were compelled to evacuate their parallels and desist in the attempt to capture the hill, which during four days' fierce fighting had cost them over two thousand casualties. The enemy's position upon 203 Metre Hill had developed a strength completely unexpected. It was by all means the strongest of their advance works. The trench-lines upon the hillsides were well built and protected throughout with sand-bags, with bomb-proof shelters at intervals. The two works upon the crest, one upon each of two peaks of the hill, were semi-permanent fortifications. The shelters were so built of timbers and roofed over with steel plates, sand-bags, and earth, that they could defy any but the heaviest shell fire. It was estimated that the enemy had a force of between one thousand and fifteen hundred upon the position. It was during the first attack upon the hill that there occurred a most extraordinary feat of artillery practice. A small party of pioneers attempted to gain the foot of the hill by making a run for it down an exposed slope some two thousand yards to the westward. The Russian gunners were waiting evidently, for the field guns

upon the crest opened with shrapnel. Five or six shells in as many minutes burst over the little party, and a deadly hail of bullets brought every man to the ground either killed or wounded. Despite this, the hail of shrapnel continued bursting over the prostrate forms, the bullets tearing up the ground round about for fully ten minutes. Wounded men tried to escape by crawling upon their hands and knees to cover, but more shells burst with wonderful accuracy and the wounded crawled no farther.

It was easy to see that the failure to capture 203 Metre Hill was a great disappointment to the Headquarters Staff of the army. The losses had been great, and absolutely nothing had been accomplished by three days of the bitterest fighting that had yet taken place. On the contrary, the investing army was in a worse position than it had been before the fight began, for it had been compelled to evacuate its sapping trenches to the foot of the hill, which had taken almost a month to excavate, and cost the lives of many soldiers.

CHAPTER XV

The closing in of the line of investment about the two Urhlung forts and in the gorge of the Shuishi Valley—Furious opposition of the enemy against the sapping operations—The inadequacy of the Japanese siege artillery—The arrival of the first battery of 11-inch howitzers, and the marvellous manner in which they were handled and transported.

THE capture of the Urhlung redoubt and the Shuishi lunettes enabled the investing army to begin the work of closing in its line of investment around the permanent forts upon the western extremity of the eastern fortridge. The principal object of the construction of the Urhlung redoubt was the protection of two waterworks reservoirs located close to the base of the East Urhlung fort. By means of a small pumping plant, water was raised into these reservoirs from a small stream which flows around the bases of the Urhlung fort-hills and through the gorge of the Shuishi Valley into a larger stream which empties into the harbour at Port Arthur. These reservoirs constituted the source of a considerable part of the water supply of the city, the water being conveyed by means of large iron conduit pipes. The enemy, after being dislodged from the Urhlung redoubt, strongly entrenched himself behind the railway embankment a few hundred yards from the bases of the Urhlung forthills, in order to prevent the destruction of the reservoirs, which are located within easy rifle range of the embankment, and a few hundred

yards west of the small ruined Chinese village of Palichuang. Again the tedious work of sapping had to be resumed from the destroyed redoubt towards the enemy's advance position behind the railway embankment. Every foot now gained was in spite of the most furious opposition of the Russians, who fought with the greatest spirit and determination. All day long the sapping trenches were bombarded, in spite of the strenuous efforts of the siege artillery of the investing army to check the destructive work of heavy shells from the fortress guns against the advancing trenches. Working parties laboured during the night with their rifles, bayonets fixed, within easy reach, always confident that before dawn they would have to repel sortie parties of the enemy. It was in this hard and dangerous work that the splendid patience and industry of the Japanese soldier showed itself. When it is known that in front of the western half of the eastern fortridge alone there were literally hundreds of miles of trenches excavated under the conditions described, some idea can be had of the enormous amount of manual labour expended, to say nothing about the conditions under which it was done. Nor were these trenches mere temporary shallow ditches designed to afford cover for infantry alone. There were dozens of miles of main trenches so wide and deep that thousands of soldiers lived in them for months. Time and time again, I have seen mountain guns upon their carriages rushed up these trench-lines in order to participate in some attack upon a fort or entrenched position of the enemy, through trenches five and six feet wide and ten feet deep, extending for miles from

the rear to the front lines. It was a most wonderful sight to stand upon an elevation in rear and watch day after day the whole surface of the Shuishi Valley from the dry watercourse in its centre, which formed the rear of the advance lines, towards the forthills, being converted into a huge system of zig-zag trenches and crossing parallels, for all the world like the illustrations in the regulation drill-books, designed to show the manner in which siege trenches and parallels should be excavated. To the Russian troops in the forts and upon the ridge in rear the approach of this irresistible system of trenches towards their defensive works seemed to bring out all the latent fury and determination in their character as soldiers. No garrison that ever defended a position could have evinced greater courage and determination. Not a chance was lost. Often when there was not one chance in ten of success, the most gallant attempts were made under cover of darkness to check the irresistible progress of sapping lines which day by day brought the inevitable destruction of their strong defensive works closer and closer. Every device the human brain could devise was employed upon both sides. The assaults which followed when the saps got closer were absolutely tragic in character, but infinitely more tragic still were the daily and nightly struggles which preceded the time when those assaults were made.

Up to the time the advance works in the Shuishi Valley were captured the heaviest guns which the investing army mounted were 6-inch naval guns, and of those there were only two. In addition to the divisional artillery, which included one hundred and eight field and mountain guns, the

siege train consisted of a general field artillery brigade of seventy-two field guns, two 6-inch naval guns, eight 4.7-inch naval guns, fourteen 12-pounder naval guns, twenty-eight 4.6-inch field howitzers, four 4-inch new pattern Krupp guns, and one hundred and forty-six siege guns of different patterns, including 6-inch and lighter mortars, and thirty 4.1-inch old pattern bronze Krupp guns. Though the heavier siege guns were excellently placed in masked battery positions among the foothills of the Feng-hoang-shan range, with the exception perhaps of the heavier naval guns, they were found to be wholly inadequate to silence the fire of the much heavier fortress artillery which the Russian position mounted. This weakness had been apparent from the very first, but became painfully evident when efforts were made to check the awful fire of the enemy's guns against the sapping trenches about this time. Directly in the centre of the Japanese position, opposite the two Urhlung forts, where the greatest efforts of the Russians were concentrated against the sapping operations, were placed six 4.7-inch naval guns and fourteen 12-pounder naval guns, just over the crest of a ridge facing the enemy's position. These were by all means the most effective batteries upon the centre of the investing army, but the guns were not particularly well placed. For a time they did considerable execution, but their positions were finally located by the enemy, and for days after the entire ridge was deluged with heavy shells from the fortress batteries. The positions were simply pounded to pieces with 10 and 12-inch shells from the Russian howitzers. Things soon became too hot for the

Japanese gunners, and after two guns had been disabled and the emplacements knocked to pieces, the batteries were shifted to new locations. The ridge upon which they had been placed was battered out of all resemblance to its former shape. The front slope was literally honeycombed with great holes torn in its surface by bursting shells, while the crest was completely torn away. The casualties suffered by the naval gunners during these days were very heavy. This was the only occasion when I saw Japanese guns badly placed, and was probably due to the training of the gunners, who at sea are accustomed to use direct fire almost exclusively. It was only after they had suffered severely that they adopted the method so well understood in the army, of placing their guns so that they could be used for indirect fire. From that time on they not only did better work, but they baffled the ability of the enemy's gunners to locate their exact positions, with the result that they suffered very little. The necessity for more and heavier siege artillery was so apparent about this time that it was decided not only to increase the number of heavier naval guns, but to make an experiment with a much heavier gun than had ever before been used in siege work. A battery of 11-inch coast defence howitzers were ordered from Japan, with a view to counter-balancing the effect of the heavier siege artillery used by the Russians. There was a good deal of difference of opinion as to whether these guns could be handled and placed without encountering insuperable difficulties along the front of a position so exposed to the enemy's fire, and so full of natural obstacles calculated to make the transporting of guns of

such great weight enormously difficult and perhaps impossible. Six of these howitzers were shipped from the naval base at Saseho to Dalny by steamship, and from there were brought to the rear of the lines by rail. They were transported each upon two 10-ton trucks, which were run as close to the front as was possible. The guns, which weighed ten tons, were lashed to well-built platforms raised about three feet from the flooring of the trucks. When they arrived at their destination the trucks were shunted up to a platform alongside the railway track constructed of four-inch planks ten feet in length. This platform was four or five feet wide and slightly lower than the elevation of the gun on its bed upon the railway trucks. Straddling the track, a huge set of sheer legs were erected with three spars and a heavy metal crown, to which was attached an eight-inch lifting eye equipped with treble purchase chain hoists and side pulley guides. By means of this hoisting gear the huge barrel was lifted from its bed upon the trucks to the prepared platform alongside the railway track. The platform was mounted upon roller skids, and after the gun had been securely lashed to its bed, the whole structure was slowly moved over ways made by laying four-inch planks upon the soft ground. From these high platforms the gun was lifted on to low two-wheeled trucks very strongly built and equipped with six-inch wide small iron wheels. Securely lashed to these low trucks they were taken over the roads, in some cases five and six miles, to where it was proposed to place them, by long lines of soldiers pulling upon ropes. In turning sharp corners a hand windlass was used.

The work of loading and unloading was carried out by skilled mechanics brought from Japan for the purpose. The actual lifting and pulling work was done by the soldiers of the batteries, and was in all cases superintended by the officers. These big howitzers are constructed after the Spezzia model of Italian howitzers, and were turned out from the Osaka arsenal in Japan. They were first intended for some of the coast defence forts, but were selected as the best pattern for the siege work at Port Arthur. The gun is about eight or nine feet in length, at the breech end twenty-eight inches and at the muzzle end fourteen inches in diameter. The mounting, which weighed seven tons, was equipped with hydraulic slides for recoil, and was the ordinary fortress turntable set in concrete. They were by no means gainly looking monsters, but their huge five-hundred-pound shells did tremendous execution. The first of these guns arrived from Dalny about the middle of September. For weeks before workmen had been engaged in preparing the foundations for the turntable mountings. Four were placed immediately in front of the centre of the eastern fortridge, while the remaining two were located under the shoulder of Ta-ku-shan, upon the extreme east flank. So quickly and skilfully were they handled and taken to the locations decided upon, that by the end of the month the six had been mounted, fully equipped for use, and squads trained in handling them. About the same time a light tram-line was laid from the ammunition park to the emplacements, over which the heavy ammunition was taken upon strongly-made trucks. It was nothing short of wonder-

ful to see the rapidity and thoroughness with which this difficult undertaking was carried out.

The placing of these big guns in positions where it would be difficult if not impossible for the enemy to ascertain their exact location was a most important matter, for they were not only difficult to move from place to place, but they had permanent concrete mountings which took a long time to prepare. It is impossible to say too much in praise of the ingenuity displayed in the selecting of locations. Although they were used continuously for three months after, not one of them was put out of action. The nearest approach was the landing of a shell close to the concrete foundation of the mountings of one which tilted the turntable a little, but the damage was so slight that it was repaired in the course of a day or two. This was little short of wonderful when it is considered that the Russian batteries concentrated their fire for weeks in efforts to locate the positions of these howitzers, which did such tremendous damage to their defensive works. The hillsides about the positions were literally torn into great holes by the bursting shells designed to put them out of action. Had they been badly placed their usefulness would have been practically nothing, for it would have taken months to repair the damage which a single successful shell could have inflicted upon the permanent turntable mountings, which would have had to be completely renewed by parts sent from Japan. At first smokeless powder only was used, but later an enormous majority of the shells were fired with black powder, and yet the enemy was unable to place the spots where they were.

It was previously announced that the new battery

of howitzers would open fire for the first time upon the 1st day of October. Great results were expected from the experiment, not only in smashing the interior defensive works of the various forts, but in seriously damaging the warships in the harbour. General Baron Nogi, accompanied by General Baron Kodama, the Chief of Staff of General Marquis Oyama, the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Armies in Manchuria, who had come to Port Arthur to see the results of the experiment, witnessed the bombardment from the crest of the headquarters observation hill. During the morning about one hundred of these big shells were fired into the North Keekwan fort. The explosions caused great clouds of smoke and dust to rise from the interior, but beyond that there was no evidence of the damage done. As a matter of fact it was discovered later that the concrete works in the North Keekwan fort resisted the destructive force of the shells for a considerable time because of the thickness of the concrete and the excellence of their construction, but the time came when even these strong defences had to succumb. The following day the fire was directed upon the battleships in the harbour. Five shots were fired at the battleship *Pobieda*, of which four missed, but the fifth shell struck her upon the forward deck, and apparently went through, leaving a huge rent from which columns of smoke were seen to pour. Day after day this bombardment was kept up at the warships, and apparently considerable damage was done, for upon the 11th of the month the Russians resorted to the ruse of placing one of their hospital ships in the direct line of fire against the vessels of the fleet. The Japanese at once lodged a protest

against this breach of the Geneva Convention with the French Minister in Tokyo, and continued their bombardment. Upon the 15th of October two more batteries of six of these big howitzers each arrived at the front, and were quickly placed in position. Four were located upon the right flank about a mile from 203 Metre Hill. It was entirely due to the splendid manner in which these guns were placed that they were able to do such tremendous execution later on in the siege when 203 Metre Hill was captured. Though the hill-slopes for hundreds of yards around the position of this battery were torn by the concentrated fire from the Russian fortress artillery, not one of the guns was touched. In the centre of the Japanese position nine were splendidly located, while upon the left flank there were five, all so placed that they were able to bring a concentrated and converging fire upon the western half of the eastern fortridge, and upon the city and harbour in rear. The difficult work of shifting and placing these howitzers was executed by the troops in a very short time. Sixteen out of eighteen were fully placed and ready for use by the 26th of the month, and the full number two weeks later. The other additions made to the siege train consisted of four 6-inch naval guns and two 4.7-inch naval guns, bringing the total strength, exclusive of divisional artillery, up to three hundred and ten guns.

Meantime the sapping trenches of the investing army were being pushed closer and closer to the enemy's forts and entrenched positions upon the western half of the eastern fortridge. The enemy in the neighbourhood of the East Urhlung fort, upon the evening of the 25th of September, concentrated a heavy rifle fire upon the sapping trenches

that had approached close to the foot of an entrenched hill known as Hachimakiyama, which occupies a position in the fort-line between the East Urhlung fort and the West Panlung fort. Under cover of this fire a small force made a sortie, and engaged the working parties in hand-to-hand encounters which lasted about half an hour. They were finally compelled to retire, leaving two-thirds of their number dead in the Japanese trenches. A little after midnight, two nights later, two determined sorties were made against the same trenches. The Russians retired only after an hour's fierce fighting at close quarters. Between half-past seven o'clock in the evening and four o'clock in the morning of the 2nd of October the enemy made a determined attempt to destroy the sapping trenches towards the big East Keekwan Hill from a trench-line which belts the hill a short distance from its base. The Japanese sapping trenches had approached to within one hundred and fifty yards of this line of defence. From three directions the enemy's sortiers approached the Japanese sap head under cover of darkness. In spite of a desperate resistance they succeeded in taking possession of a considerable section of the trench. Supports were at once sent forward, and after a bitter fight, which lasted until two o'clock in the morning, the sortiers were dislodged and compelled to retire to their own lines, but not until they had wrecked the work of weeks. The casualties upon both sides in this fight were considerable. About eleven o'clock the same morning a large force of the enemy, numbering a battalion or more, advanced from the first trench-line upon 203 Metre Hill and endeavoured to wreck the work of the sappers. The Japanese trenches had

approached to within two hundred yards of the base of the hill. The attack was made in broad daylight, and not as these attempts were usually made, under cover of darkness. For an hour there was a desperate struggle, during which the Russian infantry charged the sap heads three or four times with great daring. They were finally compelled to retire after having sustained something over two hundred casualties.

The headquarters of the eleventh division upon the left flank of the investing army were located upon the north-east side of Ta-ku-shan, quite close to the foot of the hill, so that its steep escarpment gave protection from the artillery fire from the forts upon the eastern extremity of the fortridge. The main leading trenches from headquarters to the front investing lines extended around the north-east shoulder of Ta-ku-shan, and from there worked through deep sluits or dongas towards the fortridge. The most easterly position occupied by the enemy was upon an elevation known as Signal Hill, from which a considerable section of the leading trenches was visible. The Russians had mounted a number of automatic quick-firers and machine guns upon this hill, and for weeks had made it exceedingly dangerous for troops going from divisional headquarters to the front lines. About nine o'clock on the evening of the 4th of October, three companies were ordered to make a surprise attack upon the enemy's position upon Signal Hill, and if possible destroy the guns which had caused so much trouble. The Russian garrison was taken completely by surprise, and the position was captured after a short fight. Reinforced, the enemy advanced almost immediately after to retake the hill, which

Headquarters Camp, 11th Division. Showing how the Steep Reverse Slopes of Hills were utilized.

was also subjected to a heavy fire from the forts upon the eastern extremity of the fortridge. The Japanese succeeded, before being compelled to evacuate, in dismantling and destroying the guns the position mounted. Strange to say, though the enemy reoccupied the hill the same night, they never replaced the guns which had caused so much damage and inconvenience to the Japanese.

During the second week in October the Japanese sappers had pushed their trenches close to the advance position of the enemy behind the railway embankment near the base of the East Urhlung forthill. Before further progress could advantageously be made, it was necessary to dislodge the enemy from his advance position. Three companies belonging to the nineteenth regiment of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division succeeded upon the night of the 11th in driving the Russians from a portion of their line. Later the same night another effort was made by the same force to capture the remaining section, but the attempt was a failure, and ended with a decided repulse. The following night, however, a single company made a surprise attack, and succeeded where three companies had failed the night before. The enemy was forced to retire so hurriedly that they left their overcoats and kits behind. An attempt was made to recapture the same night, but it was easily repulsed. The capture of this advance position was most important, for not only did it permit of the sapping trenches being run up to the foot of the East Urhlung forthill and the entrenched hill known as Hachimakiyama, but it enabled the investing army to destroy the waterworks reservoirs, which was promptly done, thus cutting off one of the sources of supply for the besieged city.

CHAPTER XVI

The difficulties encountered in running sapping trenches up to the East Urhlung forthill—The successful assault upon Hachimakiyama entrenched hill—The first use of the dynamite grenade mortar—Expedients resorted to by the Japanese to destroy wire entanglements—A visit to the workshops of the engineering corps—How entrance was gained to the moat defences of the North Keekwan fort—The stories of surrendered Russians—The last stage of the sapping operations in front of the forts upon the western half of the eastern fortridge.

THE work of sapping up the rocky slopes of the East Urhlung forthill was enormously difficult and dangerous. In the first place, the fort was one of the largest and strongest upon the eastern ridge, and in the next place, not more than a two-foot deep trench could be excavated any place upon the forthill without cutting through solid rock. This made it necessary to build up trench-walls of sand-bags, which offered a splendid mark for the enemy's artillery and were constantly being smashed by shell fire. The trenches had not been run very far up the slopes before it became evident that a further advance meant that the work would be open to an enfilading fire from the trenches upon the crest of an entrenched hill called Hachimakiyama, which lies immediately east of the fort and between it and the West Panlung fort. It therefore became necessary to secure possession of this hill. Shortly after ten o'clock on the morning of the 16th of October the Japanese artillery opened with a desultory fire against the forts upon this section

of the ridge, which by noon had developed into a heavy bombardment. The enemy's artillery replied with heavy shells against the Japanese battery positions and shrapnel against the trench-lines at the foot of Hachimakiyama and the East Urhlung forthill. About half-past two o'clock in the afternoon the Japanese artillery fire, which up to this time had been more or less general in character, was concentrated upon the hill to be taken and the two Urhlung forts next west upon the ridge. An hour later the three hills were simply smothered with shrapnel until a little after four o'clock, when the infantry emerged from their parallels at the foot of the hill, and charged up the slopes to the trench-line upon the crest over which the Japanese shrapnel was playing in sheets of flame. Before leaving their trenches the infantry had fixed bayonets, so there was no halting upon the way. So marvellously well had the artillery done its work that there was comparatively little for the infantry to do, although from its position Hachimakiyama ought to have been one of the most difficult positions upon the ridge to take by assault from parallels at the foot of the hill. It was only when the black wave of men reached the crest of the hill and a few dozen yards from the trench-line that they came under a heavy fire. Then men went down in dozens, but the distance to be covered was too short for the enemy to get in much deadly work. In two seconds' time after they came under heavy fire the Japanese infantry were overrunning the enemy's trenches bayonet in hand. There was no resisting the onslaught, for the assaulters surged over the crest, not in open order with thin lines, but in irregular close order, lines deep. The

defenders were immediately forced to retire, the few who remained to take on the bayonet charge being quickly wiped out. Here again the artillery proved its enormous use in attacks of this kind. The moment the assaulting infantry reached the crest of the hill within a few dozen yards of the trenches they came under a most awful fire from the rear, where long lines of supports occupied a square of trenches upon the higher glacis of the hill directly in front of the Chinese Wall. Simultaneously with the arrival of the assaulters at this point in the attack, the cloud of shrapnel which had been playing over the trenches upon the crest during the advance up the slopes, was changed in a twinkling, and instead made the rear trench-lines an inferno of bursting shells. There was another clever feature in connection with this attack. All the time the assault was in progress the infantry in their trenches at the foot of the East Urhlung forthill made feints to advance up the slopes, as if it were the intention to capture the trenches upon the crest of that hill as well. This ruse was successful in keeping the infantry which lined those trenches fully occupied, and prevented their pouring in an enfilading fire upon the troops advancing up the slopes of the hill immediately to the east. In this assault the Japanese exhibited the strong point of their method of attack with a degree of success which could scarcely have been expected from it. Their total casualties were only three hundred, while the enemy left one hundred dead upon the captured position. It is only necessary to realize the position of this hill with relation to the surrounding positions of the Russians to understand that, without the

simply perfect artillery support rendered, the infantry would not have been able to have taken Hachimakiyama at three times the cost in life. With the hill the Japanese captured one field, one automatic quick-firer, and two machine guns. Though the trenches upon the north front of the hill had been captured, possession was by no means secure, for the enemy still occupied a strong position in semi-permanent trenches upon the rear glacis in front of the Chinese Wall, and at the head of the gorge between the hill and the East Urhlung fort. The following night several small determined sorties were made from these trenches against the infantry engaged in entrenching itself upon the captured portion of the hill. Dynamite grenades were freely used, and some of the trenches destroyed, but the enemy was driven back as often as he advanced. Day and night the captured position was bombarded by the fortress artillery, but despite the damage done to the defensive works the captors managed to retain their foothold.

It was during the progress of this attack that the first mortar for the projection of dynamite grenades was used by the Russians against the sapping trenches at the foot of the East Urhlung forthill. At first the Japanese could not understand where the grenades which began to drop all about their trenches came from. The nearest of the enemy's lines was upon the crest of the forthill fully three hundred yards away, so that to throw a grenade by hand that distance was obviously impossible. Ground scouts were sent out the same night to find out where these grenades came from. They discovered that the Russians had mounted several short wooden mortars upon

the top of their trench-walls, and from these guns the grenades were projected with approximate accuracy to the sapping trenches three hundred yards distant. This idea appealed strongly to the Japanese, for without some strong propelling power it was impossible for them to use grenades at any distance against positions upon a much higher level. The shops of the engineering corps at once became busy with experiments in making dynamite mortars, or bomb-guns as they were called. It was when these experiments were in progress that I was permitted to visit the shops in company with one of the officers of the engineering corps. Though I had come with permission, I could see that there were many things about the work which was going on there that it was not intended any stranger should see. It was an extremely busy place, in which there were somewhere about one hundred workmen, some of them belonging to the engineering corps of the army, and others skilled mechanics from Japan brought out for special purposes. In addition to ascertaining how the bomb mortars were made, I found many other ingenious contrivances suggested by the difficulties which had to be overcome in pushing the sapping trenches up to the strong defensive works of the enemy. The dynamite grenade mortar was a simple contrivance. It consisted of two half round pieces of hard wood about three feet in length. Placed together these two pieces constituted the gun. Around the outside, to keep them together and give the whole strength, bamboo hoops were tightly placed close to one another, so that they practically covered the whole length of the barrel. This primitive gun was mounted

upon a very simple wooden stand. The grenades consisted of a tin cylinder five inches in diameter, inside which the dynamite charge was placed. Attached to the exploding charge was a time-burning fuse which projected about half an inch from one end of the tin cylinder or cartridge. The greater part of the burning fuse was inside the cylinder, so that it could not be extinguished before the bomb exploded. There were five ranges at which the gun could be used, two hundred and fifty, three hundred, three hundred and fifty, four hundred, and four hundred and fifty yards. The most effective range was the shortest of the five. The driving charges were carefully graduated for these ranges, and consisted of small bags of powder which were tied to the projecting end of the burning fuse. The tin cartridge with the powder charge tied to the end of the burning fuse was placed in the mortar and the driving charge ignited with a slow match. The explosion of the powder ignited the time fuse of the bomb. Day after day, in rear of the engineering shops, experiments were made until the driving charges and time fuses for the different ranges were correctly ascertained. Small squads of men from the different regiments occupying the front trenches were also drilled in the handling of the guns and their unique ammunition. In a few weeks' time there was not a trench-line along the front which was not equipped with these grenade mortars. The soldiers, with a little practice, became expert in using them. They even learned to know and understand the peculiarities in deviation of fire of the hastily-made mortars. The grenade for use by hand was a much simpler affair. If they could

be had, obsolete shell cartridges were used to contain the dynamite charge. The Russians principally used obsolete Chinese shell cases or cartridges, of which there were thousands of rounds in the fortress of Port Arthur when it was taken over by Russia ten years ago. The Japanese hand-grenade was usually encased in a tin cylinder, but very much smaller than that used in the bomb-gun. The time fuses were all made the same length, and projected from one end of the cartridge. It was a matter of careful calculation to time the burning of the fuse to the distance the grenade was to be thrown, so that it would explode as soon as it landed. If the bomb was thrown too soon after the fuse was lighted, there was always the danger of the enemy at whom it was thrown picking it up and sending it back to explode in the trench from whence it came, to do damage there. Temporary ranges for throwing these hand-bombs were established close to the engineering shops, and squads of men, usually non-commissioned officers of regiments, were trained in handling and throwing them. Before the end of the siege the Japanese soldiers acquired considerable skill in throwing hand-bombs the correct distance, and having them explode the moment they landed.

The closer the two forces approached one another the more general became the use of grenades of all kinds, and the more necessity there was to invent devices to prevent those thrown by the enemy from doing serious damage. So great had been the casualties among the working parties at the heads of sapping trenches, especially as those trenches came closer and closer to the enemy's strong defensive works, from grenades thrown by

sortie parties, that some means had to be resorted to in order to prevent the bombs from doing their deadly work. The engineers, after many experiments, contrived a guard which worked exceedingly well. Strong wooden frames about six feet long and four feet wide were made, over which was stretched a network of wires, which made the whole thing look like a wire bed mattress. These screens were fixed over the top of the trench-walls where the working parties were engaged. Practically all the sorties against sap heads were made under cover of darkness. When grenades thrown by the enemy landed upon these wire screens, they at once were thrown to one side, where they exploded harmlessly by the recoil from the springy wire surface upon which they were thrown. These screens were also largely used to prevent the enemy from throwing shells filled with burning powder against sand-bag trenches, with the object of setting the bags on fire and allowing the ground with which they were filled to run out, thereby destroying the trench-walls. The destruction of the enemy's wire entanglements in front of their defensive works, so as to make a clear passage for assaulting infantry, was from the first days of the siege the cause of the heaviest casualties among the pioneers, whose duty it was to do this sort of work. As the siege progressed and the permanent forthills became the object of attack, this work became infinitely more dangerous. The cutting of quarter-inch thick steel wires attached to posts, the principal of which were in many cases embedded in concrete at points upon slopes which were literally swept by a rifle and machine-gun fire, was a very serious undertaking. At first pioneers were sent out

immediately in advance of the infantry to cut the wires in the ordinary manner, but the wire used was so heavy and strong that they were usually all shot down before they succeeded in their task; and the infantry in many cases had to stop in their advance and crawl under the wires, a most expensive operation for charging troops, and one which the enemy never failed to take full advantage of. Long-handled cutters, which gave the pioneers sufficient purchase to make it possible for them to sever the heavy wire, were then obtained, but even with these the casualties among the pioneers continued to increase with tremendous rapidity. The brains of the engineering corps were set to work to overcome this important difficulty. Wooden shields made in the shape of the letter A, the front surface covered with sheet iron, were first tried. They were about two feet long, about twenty inches in height, and had a slit for the rifle barrel. The idea was for the pioneers to advance along the ground upon their stomachs, pushing this contrivance in front of them. It was found that these shields were not only heavy and clumsy, but afforded little real protection, as they were either pierced by bullets at short range, or were twisted around by the impact, so that the man behind them was as often without as with cover. It was about this time another expedient was resorted to by the Japanese which had the effect of increasing the bitterness of feeling which already strongly marked the fighting between the two armies. With the object of destroying the enemy's entanglements, pioneers would advance to a point quite close to the wires and then fall prone as if they had been hit. There they remained motionless

until the enemy, thinking they were dead, did not continue to watch them. With a wriggling movement, still lying as they fell, these venturesome soldiers worked their ways under the wires, and with long-handled cutters, still lying as they fell, cut the wires, moving slowly and carefully from line to line. It did not take the enemy long to discover this ruse, and when they did they made certain that everything Japanese lying near their entanglements was dead past any possible doubt. The result was, of course, that many an innocent wounded soldier paid the price with his life. Another method resorted to by the Japanese, in order to destroy the enemy's entanglements upon the forthills, was always put into execution under cover of darkness. Pioneers crawled from their trenches dragging behind them one end of long ropes, which they strongly tied to the upright poles which held the wires. Half a dozen of these ropes would be attached to the poles, for a stretch of a hundred feet or more of the entanglements. Then the pioneers would crawl back to safety again, and soldiers at the other ends of the ropes, in their trenches, would heave and pull until poles, entanglements, and everything else gave way, and the desired breach was made. This expedient worked well until the Russians also crept out from their works and fastened strong guy wires to the inside line of upright poles, so that the whole barricade could not be uprooted and destroyed in this manner. Another scheme was tried with considerable success. Long thick bamboo poles were charged with some kind of burning powder which emitted a heavy black smoke. Carrying this pole in front of them, half a dozen pioneers

would charge towards the wires, throw it in front of them, where it would form a screen of dense impenetrable smoke, under cover of which they would cut the wires, and then make the best of their way back to cover. Similar poles charged with dynamite were also taken up to the wires at night and placed under them. A time fuse was lighted which gave the pioneers time to get back to cover before the explosion occurred which destroyed the wires. The trouble with all these expedients was that they could only be done once or twice before the enemy was prepared to meet them with similar ingenious schemes. The increasingly heavy casualties among the pioneers compelled the engineers to again experiment with the shield idea for advance work in the open. The new shield was of quarter-inch thick sheet iron, and was made so as to be worn strapped over the shoulders. It covered the head and shoulders of the pioneer and reached down to about his knees. The headpiece had a narrow slit through which he could see where he was going. In order to enable him to cut wires there was a slit from the bottom of the shield, so that the man could put his cutters through and work them still behind cover. The first of these shields were found to be useless, because they were pierced by bullets at short range. New ones were made of steel plates, which successfully resisted the penetrating power of any bullets. Then came the difficulty of a man being able to stand up under the force of the impact caused by a heavy fire being turned upon him by rifles or machine guns, or both. In order to overcome this, the pioneer dragged behind him, fastened to his waist, two short bamboo poles which acted

like the primitive pole-brake used to check the impulse of loaded waggons to go backwards down hill. With these brakes he was able to resist any force of impact from bullets fired at him. These shields were found to work so well that they were in constant use during the remainder of the siege. They weighed between thirty and forty pounds.

The sapping trenches of the troops of the eleventh division had approached within about one hundred and sixty yards of the moat at the North Keekwan fort about the middle of October, despite the most strenuous opposition of the enemy, who was on the alert day and night. At this point no less than six electric contact mines were unearthed by the working parties just under the crest of the forthill. The wires seemed to be intact, but the contact had probably been destroyed by the length of time they had been under ground, for not one of them was exploded. So heavy and persistent was the enemy's fire upon the approaching trenches that from this point on to the fort moat the saps had to be run under ground in the form of tunnels. The enemy soon discovered that this was being done, and at once started counter-tunnels from the moat under those of the Japanese. On the 23rd the enemy exploded a heavy dynamite mine in their counter-tunnel, directly under that of the Japanese, with the object of wrecking it. This they succeeded in doing, but the explosion also uncovered the concrete roof of one of the caponier chambers inset in the counterscarp of the moat, and made a small hole in it. The Japanese at once resumed work upon their damaged tunnel, and during the night succeeded in running it up to the hole

made in the roof of the caponier chamber. A machine gun was at once mounted, and under its fire the enemy was forced to retire from the chamber below. The aperture was gradually enlarged, and pioneers gained entrance by dropping to the concrete floor below. They were at once shot down by the enemy from a long gallery which extended along under the counterscarp of the front moat wall and connected the caponier chambers at each corner. It was evident from this incident that the Japanese did not know of the existence of this gallery any more than they knew of the existence of the moat itself when the fort was assaulted in August. Sand-bags were then dropped down through the aperture in the roof of the caponier chamber, and despite the fact that the Russians removed them as fast as they could, sufficient cover was made to enable a small firing party to establish itself inside the chamber at the north-west corner of the fort moat. This was the beginning of an underground struggle to obtain possession of the caponier chambers and galleries which formed the enormously strong defences of the moat, which lasted for over a month.

The first division was in the meantime having a desperate time in its efforts to run sapping trenches towards the enemy's trench-lines close to the base of 203 Metre Hill. In a single night no less than five sortie parties attacked the sap heads. They succeeded in capturing and destroying a considerable section of the saps, but were finally forced to retire. This was the third time these trenches had been destroyed in the same manner. The same night these sorties took place a Russian

non-commissioned officer wearing the Red Cross of the Geneva Convention surrendered himself close to the enemy's lines at 203 Metre Hill. He was at once brought to Army Headquarters, where he made a statement to the effect that he had surrendered because Port Arthur was in imminent danger, and the officers of the garrison compelled the inhabitants, Chinese as well as Europeans, to work day and night, allowing them hardly any time for rest. Complaints and bewailings were consequently heard on all sides. The combatants suffered from privation, for several months had received no pay, and were compelled to do excessive work. Whether from this same prisoner, or from others who were taken or gave themselves up about this time, the Army Staff claimed to have information to the effect that the officers of the garrison had discovered a plot in which some two hundred men of the garrison of 203 Metre Hill had decided to surrender, and that the suspects were being tried by court-martial and shot as a warning to others who might be animated by the same desire. It was also said that the reason for the desperate opposition offered to the progress of the sapping operations was due to a scheme of General Kondrachenko, whereby a body of four hundred volunteers from the garrison generally had been raised to make night sorties to destroy the sapping trenches and any small guns used in their protection by the Japanese. These men, it was reported, had been induced to take on the work by the promise from the Commander of the garrison of decorations and money rewards. In the advance works captured during the month of September marine torpedo-tubes

and quantities of fish torpedoes were discovered, but though these destructive implements of naval warfare were found fully equipped and ready for use, it was not until the sapping trenches upon the East Urhlung forthill reached a distance of about forty yards from the Russian trenches around the crest of the hill that they were used. Upon the night of the 24th of October, however, two mines encased in the heads of fish torpedoes were projected in some manner from the enemy's trenches into the sap heads, where they exploded and caused considerable damage to the works and many casualties among the working parties.

By the last week in October the sapping operations had progressed so favourably that further progress could best be obtained by a general assault with the object of gaining the glacis and fort moats upon the western half of the eastern fortridge. It was announced by Army Headquarters that a general advance would be attempted upon the 26th of the month. All three divisions of the army would take part in the attempt. The eleventh division would attack the East Keekwan Hill and the North Keekwan fort. The ninth division would attack an entrenched hill known as "P" fort, immediately west of the North Keekwan fort and between it and the East Panlung fort, and the East Urhlung fort. A portion of the first division would attack the West Urhlung, or Sung-shu-shan, fort. The attack would be preceded by a heavy bombardment, and the assaulting infantry would be supported by a demonstration upon either flanks. The bombardment was commenced about half-past nine o'clock in the morning. It continued increasing in volume until five o'clock in the after-

noon, when the infantry in front of the East and West Urhlung forts emerged from their parallels and charged the enemy's trench-lines around the crest of the hills, while the artillery poured a heavy shrapnel fire into the trenches and forts in rear. The long and well-sustained bombardment by the siege artillery had compelled the Russians to withdraw a portion of the force holding these advance trenches, for the assaulters did not come under any very serious fire until they reached within a few yards of the enemy's trench-lines. The advance up the West Urhlung forthill was, however, met with a most tremendous shrapnel fire from the Itzeshan and An-tzu-shan forts on the opposite side of the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. The advance up this forthill was made at considerable loss in life owing to this shell fire, but finally the troops of the first division managed to entrench themselves close to the counterscarp of the fort moat, to which point they later ran their sapping trenches. In front of the big East Urhlung fort the Russians had made a level glacis from the counterscarp wall of the moat extending about one hundred yards, and at its northern extremity there was a steep declivity from the crest of this made glacis to the hill-slope below. It was around this glacis in front of the fort moat that the advance trenches of the enemy were. The Japanese sapping trenches had reached a point just underneath this steep declivity, so that the Russian advance trenches were immediately above, a distance of forty-five yards. When the assaulters had swarmed up into the enemy's trench-lines, which were very lightly held, the Russians exploded a mine underneath the trenches at the north-west corner of the glacis.

A huge cloud of smoke and dust, through which could be seen timbers from the trenches, débris of all kinds, and the bodies of a few unfortunate Japanese soldiers, was sent up into the air about one hundred feet. After the trenches had been captured there took place one of the most remarkable feats in trench work during the whole of the siege. In order to enable them to hold the captured trenches it was necessary for the Japanese to continue their sapping trenches from the foot of the steep declivity to the trench-lines which had just been taken. This was no easy matter, for it meant that the working parties would have to excavate upon the open hill-slope under a most awful shell fire. It would have been exceedingly dangerous to have waited until darkness covered the working parties, for in the meantime the Russians could have made an effort at recapture, and there was no means of bringing up reinforcements except over the open ground the assaulters had charged over. No sooner had the Russian trenches been gained than three lines of men emerged from the head of the sapping trenches and began the excavation of these connecting trenches under a most awful shell fire from the forts across the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. Inside a single hour three lines of trenches connecting the sap head with the captured trenches upon the crest of the glacis had been excavated. Each of these lines was about forty-five yards up a steep declivity. It is impossible to conceive of a more masterly piece of work, for the men seemed literally to sink into the earth and out of sight, leaving only three lines of new-turned earth to show where they had been. During the assaults upon the two forthills the

Japanese lost three hundred and fifty killed and wounded. That the losses were so small was again due to the marvellous artillery support and the bombardment which preceded the attacks. The attacks which were to have taken place at the North Keekwan fort and the East Keekwan Hill did not materialize, or at best were only slight demonstrations. Between three and five o'clock on the following morning the enemy made several desperate attempts to recapture the trench-lines upon the glacis of the East Urhlung forthill, and also the Japanese position upon the crest of Hachimakiyama. For hours the fighting continued with great severity upon both hills, until finally the enemy was compelled to retire, leaving some sixty dead in the Japanese trenches. Owing to the incomplete nature of their trenches upon the East Urhlung forthill the Japanese losses during this night attack were very heavy, numbering over three hundred, and including six officers killed and eight wounded.

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CHAPTER XVII

The casualties sustained by the investing army during the operations prior to and the siege of Port Arthur—The hospital system—The difficulties encountered in recovering the wounded—The extraordinary manner in which the Japanese bear pain—The equipment and working of the dressing stations and field hospitals —The epidemic of beri-beri and its causes.

THE casualties sustained by the Third Japanese Army during the operations which led up to and the siege of Port Arthur, exclusive of those put out of action by sickness, were, approximately speaking, about sixty-five thousand. The number put out of action by sickness ran to nearly twenty-five thousand more. These figures, which are as nearly correct as can be until the official returns are prepared and tabulated, give some idea of the enormous amount of work which devolved upon the hospital staffs in collecting, treating, and caring for the sick and wounded during the preliminary operations and the siege of Port Arthur. Though the treatment and cure of the wounded during the siege was open to some severe criticism, generally speaking the hospital system was good, considering the enormous number of wounded who had to be cared for, especially immediately after general assaults and heavy continuous fighting which often lasted for days. The skill shown in selecting spots for the field dressing stations, where they were close to the scene of operations and under cover from rifle fire, was exceedingly good. Nothing

could have been better than the surgical equipment of the field hospitals and the skill displayed by the army surgeons. These hospitals were usually exposed to a most uncomfortable shell fire, as in nearly all cases they had to be in order to be close enough to the field dressing stations. The moment one went to the stationary hospitals in rear of the lines, it was impossible to speak with praise. In the locations the same ignorance of the first principles of the laws of sanitation that is to be found all over Japan was much in evidence, and in some cases to a disgraceful extent. It is quite possible that the unsanitary state of hospitals in rear of the lines at the front may not have had the same deadly effect similar conditions would certainly have had upon the wounded of any Western army, because those conditions were probably not much worse than the patient was accustomed to in his own country. However that may be, it is certain that it does not help a wounded soldier much to have his face and hands covered with flies when he is unable to brush them off, simply because the authorities located the hospital in which he happened to be within fifty yards of horse lines and even closer to an extensive series of kitchens. Though this condition did not apply to all the hospitals, it certainly did to some, and in none of them, even the base hospitals in Dalny, was proper attention paid to sanitation. Though this was the case, it could not be said that any of the hospitals were dirty. On the contrary, they were most scrupulously clean. It was the immediate surroundings in all cases which were unsanitary. There was one exception, however, to this general condition, and that was the hospital ships. They

were in every particular as nearly perfect as could be expected. No soldier in the world can endure more pain and show it less than the Japanese. The principal reason for this is that they have an entirely different nervous system from Western peoples. In fact, what one saw during every visit to the field and stationary hospitals was convincing proof that in all cases the wounded had few nerves and in some none at all. The difference in diet, no doubt, has a great deal to do with it. Fish and rice, with a few vegetables and a little meat occasionally, is not a diet calculated to produce great vitality. The characteristic of the Japanese in always concealing their feelings had also to do with it. With them, to show suffering was a sign of weakness unworthy of a soldier, and habit after a long time doubtless did become more or less second nature.

The organization of the hospital system with the army in front of Port Arthur was a very simple one. From the field dressing stations, where the wounded were first attended to, there were six different stages through which the seriously wounded passed before they were finally landed in the divisional hospitals in the military districts in which the soldiers were conscripted. Each battalion in the investing army had a field dressing station. The complement of field hospitals to a division was supposed to be three, but owing to the short distance at which the field hospitals of the ninth and eleventh divisions were from the stationary hospitals in rear of the lines, these two divisions had only three between them; while the first division, because its lines were farther away from the stationary hospitals, had four. There

was only one stationary hospital for each division. From these stationary hospitals the wounded were taken by train to the base hospitals at Dalny, and from there the serious cases were moved in hospital ships to one of three depot hospitals in Japan, at Moji, Osaka, or Ujina. Finally, from the depot hospitals they were sent to what were called the divisional hospitals located in the military districts in which the patients lived.

The recovering of wounded must always be difficult and dangerous in siege operations where men are shot down in attacks upon strong defensive works, but at Port Arthur that difficulty and danger was doubly increased—first, by the comparatively narrow front against which the operations were directed; and, second, by the refusal of the enemy from the first to recognize the Red Cross. The extent to which this difficulty existed can be gathered from the result of the first attempt made to recover the wounded in front of the Panlung forts on the night of the 19th of August. Out of a stretcher-bearer section of twenty picked men, sent out with stretchers that night to collect wounded, three were killed and ten wounded. The following night the bearer sections went out without stretchers and tried to carry in the wounded one between two, but this method also proved disastrous, and had to be abandoned, because both bearers and wounded were killed. From that time on until the end of the siege the bearer sections were compelled to crawl from the front trenches under cover of darkness, and slowly pull the wounded that could be reached at all over the zones of fire to some adjacent spot which afforded some cover. Here a dressing station was immedi-

ately established. After the siege had been in progress some time the bearers became wonderfully skilful in this desperate work of recovering the wounded. It was a slow process, however, and many hundred wounded men, whose lives might have been saved, died upon the hill-slopes in front of the enemy's position because of the refusal to respect the rule which ought to apply to all civilized warfare. It is, of course, impossible to excuse firing upon the wounded or systematically shooting down stretcher-bearers, but there was a certain amount of justification upon the Russian side. Almost as soon as the siege operations commenced the Japanese pioneers resorted to the expedient of advancing from cover and falling as if killed in close proximity to the enemy's wire entanglements. There they remained until the enemy became unsuspicious. Then working slowly and cautiously with a wriggling movement, still lying as they first fell, they reached the entanglements, which they cut with long-handled wire cutters. This expedient was only put into execution once or twice with success, for the Russian infantry after their first experience made certain that every Japanese soldier who fell within crawling distance of their entanglements was dead whether he was a wounded man or not. Though there was some justification for this being done, it did not make the work of the stretcher-bearers any easier, for their crawling methods during the night left them open to the results of the great watchfulness of the enemy for similar crawlers who had another object in view.

The great difficulty experienced in finding suitable locations for field dressing stations and field

The Chinese Stretcher Bearers, waiting for their daily complement of Wounded at the Fula Hospital.

hospitals, where they would be near enough to the front lines and have at the same time some protection from rifle and shell fire, resulted in no less than twelve casualties among the army surgeons between the beginning of August and the end of September. During the same period there were over fifty casualties among the surgeons' assistants, and eighty-six among the stretcher-bearer companies, of which three were officers. During the month of September, when the koliang crops were cut or withered and died, the difficulties were enormously increased, for the tall, thickly-growing koliang, or Chinese corn, did afford some cover. Considering the difficult and dangerous conditions, the army surgeons, their assistants, and the stretcher-bearer companies did splendid work. There were, of course, large numbers of wounded who were never recovered, especially when the opposing lines approached close to one another. In the work of recovering the wounded the stretcher-bearer companies were greatly assisted by the astonishing manner in which the Japanese soldier is able to endure pain. Many cases I have personally known of mortally wounded men being first dragged by the heels over a zone of fire and then carried upon the back of a stretcher-bearer to the field dressing station. Times without number I have seen men with their arm shattered by a bullet or a splinter of shell, or a bullet wound in the head or face, walk from the front trenches to the dressing station, have their wound hastily bound up, and then walk back to the field hospital, sometimes a mile or a mile and a half distant. The number of men painfully wounded who walked back to the field hospitals during every engagement was simply

marvellous. Unless a man was severely wounded, or struck in the body or legs, he usually found his way to the field hospitals without being carried. This, of course, was of the greatest help to the hospital staffs in getting the wounded away from the dressing stations, for carrying them back in stretchers was exceedingly dangerous, especially while an engagement was in progress. It was equally dangerous to have any number of wounded collected about the place where the dressing station happened to be, for it was usually under both shell and rifle fire. The stories told by wounded who had spent days lying still under the enemy's fire and nights dragging themselves towards the Japanese advance trenches were nothing short of wonderful, and bore testimony to the great patience and endurance of these soldiers even when seriously wounded. During the months of July and August alone over eighteen thousand wounded were passed through the hospitals.

After sapping operations commenced, the engineers and pioneers suffered severely. By all means the most awful wounds were those inflicted by the explosion of dynamite grenades. When work at close range began even rifle wounds assumed a much more dangerous character, because the greater impact of the bullet caused greater expansion, and consequently inflicted serious shattering wounds. During many visits paid to the field hospitals, after the close work began, I had an opportunity of closely observing the work and methods of the army surgeons and their assistants, the kind and quality of instruments and surgical appliances used, and the general equipment of the hospitals. Nearly all the surgeons

had received their medical and surgical education in Germany. They were better surgeons than they were physicians. They did not seem to have any nerves, and their hands were both steady and deft in using the knife. The operating tables were always kept beautifully clean, and the best of modern instruments and appliances were used. Generally these hospitals were equipped as well as could be expected in a field hospital near enough to the front lines to be under shell fire all the time. The most interesting feature about the work was the conduct of the wounded during operations. Whether it is that a lower vitality than is usual in Western peoples makes its use more dangerous; I found that the surgeons never used an anæsthetic when operating upon the wounded, unless the serious nature of the wound made it absolutely necessary. The consequence was that I saw many times operations performed, which with us would never be attempted without chloroform, successfully done with the patient in full possession of his senses. Sometimes these operations were as serious as amputations, or the opening up of a bad shell wound and the extracting of pieces of shattered bone, or the scraping of an injured one. During the setting of broken bones and the operations necessary in flesh wounds anæsthetics were scarcely ever used. Usually during the operation the patient remained absolutely still and smiled, though often one could see from the ashy pallor which overspread the face that the suffering endured was very great. But generally speaking they did not suffer anything like as much as a European would have suffered under similar circumstances. Of course all this made it possible to

handle a very large number of cases in a short time, and in the matter of rapidity and skill combined the Japanese army surgeon has few equals. The number of painful operations performed in the field hospitals was probably greater than would be the case with most other armies, though of course all very serious cases were sent on to the stationary or base hospitals, where they could be attended to more carefully and with better appliances. Taking them all through, the field hospitals were more thorough in their work, and met the enormous calls made upon them better than the average of field hospitals of most armies would have been able to do, because of the extraordinary manner in which those who had to be operated upon were able to endure pain.

From the field hospitals the wounded were taken to the stationary hospitals in rear of the lines. Instead of ambulance waggons, Chinese coolies were used in all cases for the moving of wounded. These coolies are accustomed to carrying heavy loads, and four of them are able to carry a wounded soldier for miles. No means of transport could be easier and more comfortable, because long practice has given the Chinese coolie a peculiarly even gait, which does not jolt the occupant of the stretcher. These stationary hospitals had many defects which did not exist in those nearer the front lines. Perfect sanitary conditions could not be expected in hospitals located principally with a view to their being under cover from the enemy's shell fire. But when there was no such danger, or at least when the danger was greatly minimised, good locations and careful attention to sanitary conditions ought to have been regarded as essential,

especially as the wounded were sometimes kept a considerable time in these places behind the lines. In realizing the importance of these two essentials the Japanese failed in almost every instance. Either the hospital tents were located close to a filthy Chinese village, where the sanitary conditions were always bound to be bad and the pest of flies correspondingly great, or they were within a few yards of horse lines, or close to the kitchens of a large stationary camp in which hundreds of soldiers lived for months. The Japanese as a nation know little or nothing about even the elementary principles of sanitation. Their cities are rendered particularly offensive and exceedingly unhealthy by open drains and ditches in which all sorts of filth festers and gives off a deadly effluvia which poisons the atmosphere. Yet they are not by any means a dirty people, for their houses and persons are kept scrupulously clean at all times. One of the most disgraceful places I have ever seen was the stationary hospital of the ninth division. It was located among the Feng-hoang-shan, where a good road wound out through the hills towards the front lines. In the first place, the valley was immediately in rear of one of the largest battery positions, and in consequence was dangerous. But it was also the camp of the reserve artillery, where the horse lines for a dozen batteries or more were located. The hospital tents were not twenty-five yards distant from the camp kitchens. If the whole rear of the lines had been scoured for a more impossible place for a hospital none worse could have been found. Its only virtue was that it was upon the main road at that point to the lines

in front. Many times I have seen wounded in these hospital tents, who were absolutely helpless, with their faces and hands covered with flies. One had to be in Manchuria at the time to realize what that meant. The presence of so many dead brought them in greater numbers than usual, and made them more venomous. They were a scourge even to a well man, but to the wounded who could not keep them off they must have been the greatest torture. During all the hot weather of August and September this hospital continued to be crowded with wounded, who had to remain there under these awful conditions. Later, when there was less need for it, the horse lines and kitchens were removed a little farther away from the hospital tents. This was the worst case I saw, but there were others that were approximately as bad. The hospitals themselves were well equipped and the wounded fairly well looked after.

The next stage in the progress of the wounded towards Japan was removal to the base hospitals in Dalny. From the stationary hospitals they were taken to Chang-ling-tzu railway station in stretchers carried by coolies. The rest of the distance, some forty miles, was done by train. First in the awful heat of summer and later in the bitter cold of winter the wounded had to make this trip in open trucks. Of course their numbers were very large, the railway was a busy one, and the difficulties of obtaining more comfortable rolling stock were very great; but it did seem that, for men who had fought as long and as well as these wounded had, too little attention was paid to their comfort, and yet there was no complaining

on the part of these stricken men. That was one of their chief characteristics. No matter under what conditions one found them, they were always cheerful, and determined to make the best of things as they were. The base hospitals in Dalny were, generally speaking, good. Almost every building in the city was appropriated for hospital purposes. They were kept scrupulously clean, and the operating rooms were well equipped in every way. But even with all the accommodation available I have seen these hospitals crowded with twelve and fourteen thousand wounded. This crowding existed everywhere at times when big attacks took place, as might be expected from the numbers of men put out of action in a single day. Eight and ten thousand casualties in a single assault was not an unusual thing in connection with the fighting before Port Arthur, and sometimes the figures ran much higher than that. On such occasions, of course, the capacity of the hospitals, from the field dressing station to the base hospitals at Dalny, was overtaxed.

The hospital ships which removed the seriously wounded from Dalny to the depot hospitals in Japan were in every particular as nearly perfect as they could be made. Personal inspection of several was convincing evidence that not only were the quarters exceedingly comfortable but the attention shown the wounded was as good as it could be. In addition to a full staff of doctors the ships were all supplied with female nurses, who were very competent and extremely attentive to the needs of the patients. The only trouble with these hospital ships was that there was not enough of them. The slightly wounded returned to Japan

in the ordinary transports if they were not fit to rejoin the ranks, but even the serious cases alone were far too numerous for them all to find accommodation in the ships prepared for carrying them. This, of course, only happened at times, but it led to a great deal of overcrowding in the base hospitals at Dalny, and made the work of the hospital staff there exceedingly difficult.

There was only one time when there was any great amount of sickness among the troops in front of Port Arthur, and that was due to an epidemic of beri-beri, which put out of action in two months some fifteen thousand men. With the exception of that, and it was only severe for those two months, the general health of the army from first to last was exceedingly good. Beri-beri is a disease peculiar to Eastern countries, and is caused by a steady rice diet. It is not uncommon in Japan, but is very prevalent in Southern Manchuria. Though the army doctors denied that such was the case, there was a good deal to prove that the virulence of the disease among the troops before Port Arthur was due, not to the rice alone, but to the fact that it was fermented. The disease began to show itself first in June during the advance towards the Russian stronghold. In that month there were eighty-one cases. In the following month the increase was enormous, the number of cases running over fifteen hundred. During the month of August the worst stage was reached, and over eight thousand men were put out of action. In September it began to disappear, and there were only a little over six thousand cases, and during the month of October the number of cases was not more than two or three hundred.

The months of June, July, and August were the wettest months of the campaign. In addition July and August were exceptionally hot. The rice used by the soldiers was very badly packed in straw matting, with no waterproof covering at all. The result was that it got wet through, not only once, but many times. This, together with the hot sun-heat which followed, produced fermentation. This may not have been the whole cause, but it was of sufficient importance to induce the authorities to send on the recommendation to Tokyo that a waterproof covering should in future be put inside the straw matting which held the rice. When the epidemic became serious during the month of July the hospital authorities advised the changing of the rations served, and instead of giving a full rice ration it was made one half wheat and the other half rice. The trouble with this was that the wheat went bad with the wet as quickly as the rice. Care was afterwards taken to prevent both the wheat and rice from being exposed to the weather, with the result that there was an appreciable reduction in the number and virulence of the cases at once. With the exception of beri-beri, there was practically no sickness among the troops during the whole siege. The reason for this immunity was the fact that the country was exceptionally healthy and the water supply fairly good. The almost entire absence of dysentery and typhoid, two diseases which usually scourge any army in the field, was due almost entirely to the splendid discipline of the soldiers. All the doctors had to do was to place a notice over a well or stream of water, and no soldier would touch it even if he was very thirsty. The Japanese do not suffer much

from heat, and therefore do not drink much water. When they do they prefer it hot, so that even in the hottest weather practically every drop they drank was first boiled in the huge regimental pots used for boiling rice. The Russian soldiers, on the other hand, though they were almost as well situated, suffered out of all proportion from virulent typhoid, simply because they would drink water which was not fit to drink without first having it boiled.

CHAPTER XVIII

The second great tragedy in front of Port Arthur, the general assault of the 30th of October—The completion of the sapping trenches up to the moats of the Urhlung forts—Preparations for the general assault and the sorties of the enemy—The heaviest bombardment of the siege—The awful slaughter upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill—The taking of the "P" entrenched hill, its recapture by the Russians, and General Ichinohe's gallant and successful second assault.

THE first general assault upon the Port Arthur position in August, though it ended in a tragedy, could be defended because of the conditions under which it was made, and the pressing need of the investing army in the north in order to take part in the battle of Liaoyang. The second general assault, which took place upon the 30th of October, could not be defended upon any ground whatever from a military standpoint. The investing army was not then urgently needed in the north. Both Liaoyang and the Shaho fights had been fought, and the forces of General Marquis Oyama were not prepared to make any further offensive move. Though utterly unprepared for such an assault it was evidently decided upon for sentimental reasons, in order that a great and glorious victory, possibly the capture of Port Arthur, might be tendered the Emperor upon his birthday, the 3rd of November. It resulted, as such mistakes in the game of war usually result, in a ghastly tragedy with nothing won except a comparatively unimportant entrenched hill in the fort-line, and even that was

bought at a terrible price. Because it was utterly premature, the fight was a wonderful one to watch, for men went down in hundreds in full view, owing to the great distances they had to advance in order to reach their objective. The history of modern warfare does not tell of a madder attempt or a more complete and tragic repulse. The object in view was ambitious enough, for it included the capture of the battery positions upon the crest of the big East Keekwan Hill and all the guarding forts upon the foothills of the eastern ridge from there to its western extremity. The order was a wholly impossible one, as the after fighting showed beyond a shadow of a doubt. And yet the troops were, as usual, tremendously optimistic. All good fighting armies are optimistic, it is true, but it needed an enormous amount of reserve optimism for those who had spent months calmly studying the strength of the enemy's position and the spirit of the defenders to enter into the spirit of sublime confidence with which the Japanese officers regarded their chances of success in this particular assault. No one who had once seen them fight could doubt their qualities as good soldiers. They would have attempted the impossible every day if permitted, but hard facts, in forts and guns placed in a naturally strong position, cannot be ignored by even the best fighting armies in the world, especially when those forts and guns are manned by soldiers who had proved themselves just as stubborn and determined as the Japanese could claim to be.

Practically day and night for the four days that intervened between the time when the Japanese pushed their sapping trenches up to the crests

of the East and West Urhlung forthills on the 26th and the time of the assault, a heavy bombardment of the Russian position was kept up, in which the 11-inch howitzer batteries played an important part. The object of this continuous bombardment was threefold: to enable the sappers to run their trenches up to the counterscarp walls of the two Urhlung forts, and at other points of attack along the line to put the finishing touches upon the system of parallels from which the assaults would be made; to make breaches in the fort walls if possible so as to make the work of the assaulters easier; and to put out of action as many of the enemy's heavy guns as might be. Before daylight on the morning of the 29th a force of over one hundred of the enemy made a strong sortie against the Japanese sapping trenches, which had almost reached the counterscarp wall of the moat or ditch in front of the West Urhlung fort. At the same time another larger sortie party attacked the sapping trenches in front of the East Urhlung fort. Both sorties were made with great spirit and determination. The party which attacked the East Urhlung saps was forced to retire after an hour's fierce fighting. The attack upon the West Urhlung saps was more successful. The Japanese had evidently been taken completely by surprise. The working parties engaged completing the work upon the parallels so as to have them ready for the assault which was to be made on the morrow were easily slaughtered, and thirty-five yards of the sap heads destroyed. A large number of reserve troops from the rear trenches were at once rushed to the scene, and a desperate fight took place for possession of the partially

destroyed trenches, which were finally recaptured by the Japanese a little after dawn. The sappers at once went to work to repair the damage done.

The object which it was expected to attain from the general assault, as explained by the Army Headquarters Staff, was to storm and take possession of the uncaptured forts and entrenched infantry positions occupying the front line upon the foothills of the western half of the ridge east of Port Arthur, from the big East Keekwan Hill to the West Urhlung fort which occupies the most westerly of the foothills and is immediately above the gorge of the Shuishi Valley, which was the dividing point of the lines of defence east and west of the city. It was also intended to take by storm the big East Keekwan Hill. After capturing this line of guarding forts and the East Keekwan Hill, which practically divides the ridge in the centre, it was proposed to continue the assault and pierce the Chinese Wall in rear of the line of guarding forts, and, having thus carried the enceinte, storm the battery positions upon this western half of the ridge east of the city, from where it was expected easy access could be had to Port Arthur itself. The guarding forts and entrenched infantry positions in this line, beginning from the west, were the West Urhlung fort, the East Urhlung fort, the entrenched hill called Hachimakiyama, the West Panlung fort, the East Panlung fort, the entrenched hill called "P" fort, the North Keekwan fort, the battery position called "Q" fort, the small entrenched hill called the Kobu fort, which lies between the North Keekwan fort and the East Keekwan Hill. Of these positions, the Japanese then held the

entrenched hill called Hachimakiyama, the West Panlung fort and the East Panlung fort, so that the positions to be attacked included the West and East Urhlung forts, the entrenched hill called "P" fort, the North Keekwan fort, the battery position called "Q" fort, the entrenched hill called the Kobu fort, and the big East Keekwan Hill. The Japanese parallels from which these seven attacks were to be made simultaneously were: against the West Urhlung fort, just over the crest of the forthill and about one hundred and fifty yards distant from the fort moat or ditch; against the East Urhlung fort, about three-quarters of the way across the made glacis below the fort walls and about one hundred yards from the fort moat or ditch; against the entrenched hill called "P" fort, upon the slope of the hill and about one hundred yards from the Russian trench-line upon the crest; against the North Keekwan fort, about fifty yards from the fort moat with a foothold in the caponier chamber under the north-west corner of the counterscarp of the moat; against the battery position called "Q" fort, upon the slope under the position and about one hundred and fifty yards therefrom; against the entrenched hill called the Kobu fort, upon the slopes about two hundred yards from the Russian trench-line upon the crest; against the East Keekwan Hill, less than one-third the way up the slopes to the crest and about one hundred and fifty yards from a Russian trench-line which belted the entire northern front of the hill and connected with the Chinese Wall in both the east and west gorges.

The bombardment was begun about nine o'clock in the morning by the naval guns and

the 11-inch howitzers opening fire against the forts and battery positions along the whole section of the line to be attacked. This bombardment steadily increased in volume until about eleven o'clock, when every available gun in the siege train was steadily pounding the forts and hills in front of the attacking parallels with a perfect avalanche of heavy shells. It was a wonderful sight to see this mile and a half of forts and battery positions simply deluged with shells for upwards of an hour, the volume steadily increasing until about noon, when the field and mountain guns joined in with shrapnel, which made the whole crest and face of the ridge bubble and boil with bursting shells. This bombardment continued steadily increasing until the entire position was enveloped in a haze of smoke and dust from bursting shells. It was by all means the heaviest bombardment of the siege, and towards the end, when the full complement of divisional artillery turned a rapid shrapnel fire on to the various points of attack, the scene was absolutely indescribable. Just when the deluge of shells was the heaviest, a few minutes after one o'clock, the infantry attacks began simultaneously at the points decided upon along the line, while the avalanche of shrapnel became more concentrated upon those points. It was impossible to follow all the details of the attacks, but from east to west the sharp rattle of rifle and machine-gun fire broke in upon the steady roar of the artillery. Along the whole line men were advancing, as it seemed, into the very mouth of the crater of an active volcano. Then the Russian rifles and machine guns started, followed closely by a perfect storm of shrapnel,

which burst over the assaulting parties. The panorama was one of awful grandeur, and mad as the whole attack certainly was, one was almost compelled to believe that it would be successful with such a magnificent artillery support.

It soon became evident that the strongest attack was being concentrated upon the big East Keekwan Hill, for a few seconds after the general advance began its slopes were black with troops charging the enemy's trench-line one hundred and fifty yards away. Men went down in scores, nay in hundreds, before the awful fire which met them; but nothing daunted, rank on rank emerged from the trenches and pressed on in close order of company groups. It was evident that no single trench-line, however strongly held, could withstand this mad, impetuous rush. In a few seconds the Russian trenches were overrun and the assaulters emerged from the farther side and continued their advance on up the steep slopes of the hill, their regimental flags at the head. In simply overrunning the trench of the enemy, and not completely capturing and holding it, the Japanese made an awful mistake, for which they paid dearly later on. Everyone seemed to be inspired with the determination to reach the common goal, the crest of the hill above. But the way was a long and difficult one. Standing out as it did into the valley beyond the forts upon the foothills of the ridge, the slopes of this hill were swept by a fire from east and west as well as from the trenches upon the crest, and the untaken sections of the lower trench-line which belted the hill from the gorge on one side to the gorge on the other. In addition the slopes were exceedingly steep, and

the assaulters had to climb fully five hundred yards before the top was reached. Heedless of the fact that men were falling all about, on they went in two long irregular columns, thin at the top but swelling into huge masses farther down the slopes. The rifle and machine-gun fire from all sides was terrible, but more awful still were the clouds of bursting shrapnel from the fort guns farther east along the ridge which cut lanes through the black masses. With a dogged determination the long columns never wavered in their progress upwards. Two thin lines finally reached the top. There were a few moments' vigorous work with bayonets full upon the skyline, and then the heads of the columns disappeared over the crest. The main bodies worked slowly upwards thinned at every yard. More men poured over the crest, a score or more. Another party of nearly a hundred men led by an officer, instead of making for the crest where the others had gone over, worked round to the west slopes immediately under the crest, evidently with the intention of attacking the Chinese Wall, which at this point mounted the west slopes of the East Keekwan Hill immediately in rear of the gorge, and went over it through a high neck between two peaks of the hill, upon either of which there was a strong battery position. When they reached the west slopes this little party found cover from the awful hail of shrapnel which was deluging the north slopes, but they came under an even more deadly rifle and machine-gun fire from the top of the gorge and the Chinese Wall. Though they went down in dozens the little party pushed on over the two or three hundred yards which lay between them

and their objective. It was well tried but it was impossible, for the farther they went the more they suffered. Finally the officer went down, and the dozen or so who were left tried to retrace their steps, but it was impossible. They fell to a man, either killed or wounded. Meantime the assaulting parties that had disappeared over the north crest a few minutes before did not reappear. The remnants of two battalions were still struggling upwards through a hail of bullets and clouds of shrapnel. The enemy upon the position above were evidently strongly reinforced about this time, for the assaulters who had disappeared over the crest a quarter of an hour before reappeared, this time in the most utter confusion. Over they came in a mob, routed, fleeing for their lives, chased by a deadly hail from rifles and machine guns. For a few seconds the downward rush was stopped by the masses of men climbing upwards. This caused a bunching upon the exposed slope. Shrapnel played in a haze of white smoke over the crowds huddled together. The rifle fire from the top of the hill was redoubled as the supports of the garrison occupied the trenches along the crest. Then came the beginning of the end. The masses broke, some ran hither and thither looking for cover they could not find, others rushed headlong down the hill they had a short time before so resolutely climbed. Through field-glasses we could plainly see the men as they were struck in their flight lurch forward and pitch headlong down the rocky hillside, tumbling and rolling after they struck the ground until their inert bodies were stayed by jagged masses of rock. It had been a mad, impetuous attack—it was a fearful repulse.

But the worst was yet to come. As the rush of fleeing men neared the trench-line of the enemy which had been overrun on the way up, it was met with a rifle fire in volleys. Turn which way they would, the broken, beaten assaulters were met with rifle fire. It was a moment in which men go mad. Cover there was none upon any part of the bullet-swept hill. There was but one thing to do, and that was to gain the cover of their parallels. Between them and safety lay the recaptured Russian trench-line which all the time was belching volleys. A quick, impetuous rush without order did it, and a few hundred men out of two battalions at last found shelter in the parallels they started from. But still there were men upon the upper slope of the hill. Two small parties with the regimental flags had not come down. Under partial cover of a dead angle, within a few hundred yards of the crest, they had remained after the mad flight had begun. Now they were cut off, utterly and completely cut off. One has to understand the sentiment of a Japanese regiment with regard to its regimental colours to understand what it meant to the reserves of those two regiments in the parallels to lose their flags in this manner. During the afternoon two or three gallant attempts were made to pierce the enemy's trench-line which intervened, but what had been done once could not be done again. The Russians had strengthened this line, so that it resisted all efforts. Darkness came and the flags still flew from the little patch of dead ground far up the hillside. Next morning I again saw the flags in the same place, but there was no life about where they were. Those who had remained with them had paid the price, and

were with the hundreds of their comrades-in-arms whose bodies stood out black against the slopes of the hill they had failed to capture the previous day.

All this is about only a single section of the fight. It was the tragedy end, but not the whole result of that unfortunate day's work. All the time the attack upon the East Keekwan Hill was in progress assaults were going on at six other points along the line. The Kobu entrenched hill was a small conical elevation which stood well out in the entrance to the gorge between the big East Keekwan Hill and the North Keekwan fort. Though it was isolated to a certain extent, so far as its individual position was concerned, this hill was really a difficult position to hold so long as it was open to the enfilading fire which could be directed upon it from the trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill on the one side, the North Keekwan fort upon the other, and the Chinese Wall in the gorge from the rear. The field work upon its crest was not a strong one, because it had been taken in August, but it was an exceedingly difficult one to hold after capture because of the position of the hill, which really served the purpose of a buffer against an advance towards the gorge between the North Keekwan fort and the East Keekwan Hill. When the general attack began the Japanese troops in their trenches upon the slopes of this hill at once advanced under a most severe concentrated and converging fire from three sides. They were mowed down like snow before a summer's sun during the charge, but the distance to the work upon the crest was short, and it offered but a feeble resistance

to the determined assault made upon it. In a very short time it was overrun and captured, while the main body of the assaulters advanced beyond it to the slopes leading to the gorge, where they were met with a most terrible rifle and machine-gun fire from the Chinese Wall at the top. Working in conjunction with the troops which advanced at the same time from the parallels upon the same slope, only a little farther west, under the battery position called "Q" fort, an attempt was made to close in upon the Chinese Wall at the top of the gorge. The climb was not a very hard one at this point, and if the wall at the top of the gorge could have been carried, it would have been possible for the successful assaulters to have joined forces with the force which was trying to carry the big East Keekwan position. Doubtless, knowing the great chances the troops which had advanced from the parallels at the foot of the north slopes of the East Keekwan Hill towards its crest were taking, desperate efforts were made by the combined force which tried to advance up the slopes towards the Chinese Wall at the top of the gorge. Had this attack been successful, the chances of taking the East Keekwan Hill would have been improved a hundred per cent., as from the top of the gorge, not only could entrance to the fatal trench-line which belted the East Keekwan Hill have been commanded at its western extremity, but it would have been possible to have assaulted the hill, if not from its rear, at least from its weak centre, where the Chinese Wall crossed it through the high neck between the north and south battery positions upon its double peaks. The enemy was evidently fully alive to the possibilities which

a successful attack in this quarter would involve, for after the first unsuccessful attempt the Japanese made to reach the top of the gorge, the force holding the Chinese Wall at the top was reinforced, and at least five machine guns were brought to bear upon any future attempts to charge up the slopes leading to the top of the gorge. All the time the attack upon the East Keekwan Hill was going on up its north slopes, the most desperate efforts were being made by the force at the foot of the slopes beyond the Kobu Hill and below the "Q" position to reach the Chinese Wall at the top of the gorge. Again and again advances were made under a most awful fire, but just as often were they repulsed. The fighting at this point was as desperate as any that took place anywhere along the line during the day, and was continued until darkness closed in without the slightest success being achieved. The only result of the attack made upon the North Keekwan fort was that the sapping trenches were run close up to the counterscarp of the fort ditch or moat at its north-east corner.

A most determined and spirited assault was made upon the enemy's position upon the crest of the entrenched hill called "P" fort. From the attacking parallels at the foot of the hill the assaulters charged the Russian trenches around the crest with fixed bayonets. With splendid courage the garrison rose in their trenches and met the onslaught at close quarters. The sight was a wonderful one, for the fighting was full upon the skyline. The Japanese supports poured from their parallels, and slowly the enemy was driven back and the trenches captured. At this

moment the Russians exploded two electric contact mines under the east and west extremities of the trench-line. The damage done was slight, but pieces of timber and huge clouds of earth were sent over a hundred feet into the air. Though the outer trenches had been captured the enemy still held the infantry work farther back upon the hill.

The attack upon the East Urhlung fort did not materialize to any great extent. A considerable force of Japanese advanced into the gorge between the forthill and the hill upon which the West Urhlung fort is located by means of a ravine which afforded some cover. Under a heavy rifle fire a small party advanced up the slopes and gained the counterscarp of the ditch, but these were soon compelled to retire because of the heavy rifle fire which was brought to bear upon them from the fort itself, from the crest of the West Urhlung forthill, and from the Chinese Wall in rear of the fort.

When the general attack commenced shortly after one o'clock, a force of about two hundred strong left their parallels in front of the West Urhlung fort, and, making their way through a narrow breach in the wire entanglements, succeeded in reaching the fort ditch or moat, under a heavy rifle fire. A second force of about equal strength left the parallels as soon as the first force had reached and descended into the ditch, and made their way to the same point. They were followed a little later by a third detachment of about a hundred. About four o'clock in the afternoon a tremendous explosion took place inside the fort, and for over an hour thick columns of smoke rolled from the in-

terior. A Japanese shell had exploded one of the magazines, and some of the interior works had caught fire. Though for three hours a force of five hundred men had occupied the fort ditch, they did not seem to be able to make much progress. Several times during the afternoon small parties tried to mount the parapets, but they were promptly shot down by the enemy in the trenches behind the first parapet wall. During all this time a sharp rifle fire was being carried on between the Japanese in their advance trenches and the enemy behind the Chinese Wall in rear of the fort. Some of the Russians could be seen firing upon the dead and wounded lying upon the slopes of the forthill in front of the ditch. All the time these various assaults were in progress the awful bombardment, under cover of which the first advances were made, was kept up. A heavier and better sustained artillery support no troops ever had during the entire siege, and yet when darkness had closed in over the scene the investing army had gotten out of the unsuccessful general assault, from which so much was expected, only a part of a comparatively unimportant entrenched hill in the fort-line. Even this small advantage they came very nearly losing later on, but the position was not only saved but completely occupied by a splendid bit of infantry work done by the troops of the sixth brigade of the ninth division under the personal command of their Brigadier, Major-General Ichinohe. This successful assault, made long after night had come on, was the one bright feature in the otherwise disastrous day's operations.

The close of the day's fighting saw the troops

of the sixth brigade busily engaged entrenching themselves upon the crest of the "P" entrenched hill. The work was both difficult and dangerous, for the enemy in the infantry work in rear and behind the Chinese Wall kept up a galling rifle fire upon the working parties. About half-past ten o'clock in the evening the Russians made two strong counter-attacks with the object of driving the captors from the hill. The first attack was repulsed, but during the second the Japanese were forced to abandon their hard-won trenches and seek the shelter of their parallels at the foot. Upon hearing of this disaster, Major-General Ichinohe took command of a strong body of reinforcements and at once assaulted the position. Led by their General the assaulting troops fought with splendid courage and spirit. For half an hour the fight continued with great fury, and finally the enemy was forced not only to retire from the trench-line around the crest, but the infantry work farther back upon the hill was taken at the point of the bayonet. Because of this brilliant piece of work the hill was afterwards called by the Japanese Ichinohe fort. Though the Kobu entrenched hill was held by the Japanese for some time after its capture during this attack, it was of no material advantage, and in the end had to be abandoned because of the casualties which the holding of it cost. The general assault had cost the investing army close to ten thousand casualties, and all they had to show was this comparatively unimportant entrenched infantry position.

It is difficult to describe the chagrin and disappointment which pervaded the army when the full measure of the failure of the assault became

known. Instead of being in a position to inform the Emperor that a fatal blow had been inflicted upon the strong defensive works of the enemy upon his natal day, there was nothing to tell but the story of a repulse tragic in all its details. The disappointment was evident in all quarters. Even the rank and file showed it. For days after, one had only to look at the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill, covered with the Japanese dead, and the pathetic sight of two small regimental flags still flying far up the slopes, to realize that the second tragedy in front of Port Arthur had occurred.

CHAPTER XIX

The spirit which animated the besieging army after the unsuccessful general assault—The first accurate news given to the world about the siege, the effect it produced in Japan and the counter-effect upon the army—The work done by the 11-inch howitzers and the heavy naval guns—A trip through the trenches to the counterscarps of the two Urhlung forts and the work of mining—The explosion of mines under the counterscarps with a view to destroying the caponiers and filling in the moats—An important advance of the investing lines west of 203 Metre Hill.

THE disastrous results of the unsuccessful general assault in August produced a great feeling of depression throughout the army. The utter failure of the second great assault in October simply accentuated the rapidly growing spirit of ferocity which was beginning to characterize every encounter between the opposing forces. During the long time spent in the laborious work of sapping up to the enemy's defensive works the troops of the investing army had paid heavily in life for every yard of progress made. Now, when the sapping trenches were within a few yards of the forts and it was expected that the reward for all that had been gone through was at hand, the stubborn enemy refused to yield an inch despite the furious onslaughts made against his defensive works. It was an interesting study in human nature to watch the faces of the rank and file after this second assault. They were not sad as they had been after a similar assault two months before. At that time they had been dumbfounded at re-

pulse, and could not understand why they had not defeated the Russians in the same manner as they had done before during the advance. Now they knew that the game was a desperate one. At last the enormous strength of the position to be taken had dawned upon them, and though unwilling, for the bitterest hate was in their hearts, they were compelled to recognize the splendid fighting qualities of the enemy behind that strong position. Wherever one met them now, the faces were those of men who had argued it all out with themselves and had come to a definite decision. But there was another, and perhaps a stronger, reason for this fixed determination to have done with failures. This reason was just beginning to make itself evident. During the three months the siege had lasted up to this time the newspaper correspondents with the army had been most effectually muzzled. The War Office in Tokyo also refused to give even a hint about what was going on before Port Arthur. But it was manifestly impossible even for the Japanese to keep the greatest siege of the world since Sevastopol an absolute secret. Even before the Port Arthur position was invested, during the days when the Japanese army was fighting its way through the sea of hills towards the enemy's stronghold, graphic stories were sent out from Chefoo describing in detail how forts had been captured by cavalry charges, the enceinte pierced, and the great fortress position tottering to an early fall. Half a dozen times during the earlier periods of the siege, when the investing army was meeting with reverse after reverse, did the stories emanating from Chefoo record splendid victories which were

said to mean the capitulation of Port Arthur within a few days. Ridiculous and untrue in every detail as these stories were, they bore out the firm belief which existed in Japan that the Russian fortress would be taken by assault, as it had been taken ten years before from the Chinese. The consequence was, that when the detailed accounts of what had actually taken place, written by correspondents who had watched every phase of the operations, were permitted to be sent out, the world, including the public in Japan, learned with amazement that, although the besieging army had gone through a very hard time, little or nothing had yet been done towards bringing the end even within guessing distance. In Japan it was felt that it was bad enough that the Port Arthur army had not been able to finish its work in time to have turned the scale in the Liaoyang and Shaho fights by its presence, but that enormous casualties should have been sustained without any great result having been obtained seemed to argue incompetence. So strong was this feeling in Japan that the *Jiji Shimpo*, the *Times* of the country, with considerable sarcasm suggested that if necessary one hundred thousand men should be sent immediately to make a speedy end of the Port Arthur fighting. This remark was unfair, but it correctly voiced the dissatisfaction of the nation, which only remembered that the general expectation was that Port Arthur would fall as it had fallen ten years previously. The obvious difference between the Chinese and Russian garrisons was either forgotten or ignored, the enormously increased strength of the position was wholly unknown, and even the investing army itself was absolutely

ignorant of the real numerical strength of the enemy's force inside the fortress position. As a matter of fact, the besieging army had worked as few armies in the world would have worked. The one fault to be found was that there was too much haste exhibited, and too strong a desire on the part of the troops to realize the expectations they knew existed in their own country that the position would be taken by storm. Lives that might have been saved were thrown away, because the scientific rules which apply to the reduction of fortress positions were ignored in the mad desire for immediate victory. Still all this did not make it any easier for the officers and men, who were speedily made to know that they had failed in what was expected of them. It is necessary to know what this means to a Japanese soldier to appreciate the full measure of the effect it had. When future plans were talked about the men ground their teeth, and when a remark was made about the splendid defence the enemy was putting up, there was a ferocious, determined look about the faces of the soldiers. All this meant more tragedies, and fighting more desperate in its character than had yet been seen, to those who knew what it all meant.

There was no time wasted in resting after the repulse. Instead, every part of the army went to work with renewed vigour. The divisional artillery kept up a steady fire day after day upon the guarding forts and the Chinese Wall in rear, while the heavier guns of the siege train pounded the battery positions in rear, and deluged the harbour with shells designed to inflict damage upon the warships. Two heavy explosions took place upon the northern outskirts of the Old Town

about ten o'clock on the morning of the 31st. The naval guns had been firing since early morning, and one of the shells had exploded a powder magazine. The force of the explosion must have been terrible, for over the crest of the ridge that intervened it was possible to see plainly the huge column of black smoke which shot up into the air fully two hundred feet. A few minutes later a second explosion occurred about the same place, of even larger dimensions, to judge from the column of smoke. During the afternoon the big howitzers heavily bombarded the North Keekwan fort, and about five o'clock in the evening a storming party climbed the parapets from the moat and apparently succeeded in occupying the trenches behind it; but they did not remain long, for a perfect storm of rifle and machine-gun fire from the interior of the fort drove them over the parapets again and down into the moat. The following day being the birthday of the Emperor of Japan, a salute of one hundred and one guns from the naval batteries was fired into the two Urhlung forts and the town in rear.

The 11-inch howitzers had by this time proved a very great success. They had been so well placed a month before that the enemy had been able only in one instance to locate their positions, and had done them no harm whatever, despite the persistent fire which was kept up at the spots where they were supposed to be. Their heavy five-hundred-pound shells, on the other hand, had spread destruction and ruin, not only in the forts and battery positions, but also among the warships in the harbour and the various workshops, ammunition factories, and magazines in and about the town. In this destructive work

the naval guns also assisted, firing principally high explosive shells, which time and time again caused disastrous fires and explosions in the Old Town. Some conception can be had of the demoralizing effect this bombardment must have had upon the garrison, when it is known that the daily average of shells from the big howitzers alone which were landed in the town and harbour and against the defensive works on the western half of the eastern fortridge, was something like three hundred and fifty. Never were forts and battery position subjected to a more awful pounding, especially the battery positions upon the East Keekwan Hill and upon the crest of the ridge east and west of the Wantai Hill. After this sort of thing had been going on for a month or more the effects began to be evident along the whole front, while in the town fires and explosions were almost a daily occurrence. Had these heavy guns been introduced earlier in the siege they would have done more to weaken the enemy's resistance than all the splendid work done by the infantry. In rear of one of these big howitzer positions one day about this time I came across a piece of 11-inch shell with the rifling criss-crossed on its bright surface. It looked curious, so I took it to the officer in command of the battery, and asked him the reason of the strange markings. He professed ignorance, and said it must have been some Russian trick. After the fall of Port Arthur, while talking with General Smirnoff, the Commander of the fortress, I discovered the reason for the criss-cross marks upon these pieces of shells. It seems that a great many of the big shells failed to explode when they landed inside the Russian

position. They were collected and taken to the positions occupied by a battery of 11-inch mortars which the Russian position mounted. The Japanese howitzers were rifled from left to right, and the Russian mortars happened to be rifled from right to left. The unexploded shells were placed in the mortars, a driving charge put in, and they were sent back from whence they came to do damage there. It may have been a dangerous experiment, but a good many of them were used in this way if the pieces of shell which one found lying about the Japanese position were any indication.

The moats or ditches around the Urhlung forts offered almost insuperable obstacles to successful assaults upon, or mining operations against, these forts. The moat of the West Urhlung fort extended around all four sides and was thirty-five feet wide and twenty feet deep. The wall of the counterscarp upon its north front was built of brick and had inset in it at the north-east and north-west corners two large caponier chambers, loopholed for rifles and machine guns, so that the moat could be swept by fire in all directions. The walls of the counterscarp on the east and west fronts, as well as the rear, were cut out of the native rock perpendicularly. From the bottom of the moat on all sides the escarp rose almost perpendicularly to the top of the parapets, immediately behind which there was a protected infantry trench. The caponier chambers under the north counterscarp were connected with the fort by subterranean tunnels under the bottom of the moat. In order to successfully assault or mine the fort it was necessary to destroy the caponier chambers and tumble the counterscarp

wall into the moat, so as to fill it up sufficiently for assaulting troops to gain the foot of the fort walls without having to clamber into and up out of the moat. The sappers also would be able much easier to reach the escarp at points where it was proposed to pierce the mine tunnels or shafts under the fort parapets. Two sets of sapping trenches had been run up over the crest of the forthill to the edge of the counterscarp at its north-east and north-west corners. A parallel trench had then been excavated along the edge of the counterscarp connecting the two lines of saps. Having been previously informed that seven mine shafts were being sunk from this lateral trench immediately behind the counterscarp wall, we secured permission to visit this front trench-line and see for ourselves what was being done.

The line of leading trenches to the forthill started from the confines of the village of Shuishi. Thither we made our way, and a short trip through the trenches brought us to the headquarters of the first brigade of the first division. A staff officer was at once detailed to take us on to the top of the forthill. This main trench-line had been very well built, and was deep enough to afford good cover without the sand-bag walls upon either side, which gave the trenches an average depth of nearly ten feet. The reason for this great depth was that the entire trench-line towards the forthill could be enfiladed by the fortress artillery upon the Itzeshan and An-tzu-shan forts across the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. The astonishing manner in which the sand-bag walls had everywhere been smashed by shell fire made us at once realize the necessity of considerable

depth of trench exclusive of the upbuilt walls, which were liable at any time to be battered to pieces. The amount of work these trenches had involved in their construction must have been enormous. It was by all means the most dangerous point along the whole fort-line, for it was at the apex of the obtuse angle formed by the enemy's lines of defences east and west of the city, and was consequently open to a terrible concentrated and converging fire from the forts and heavy battery positions upon either side of the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. No other point along the section of the ridge against which operations were being directed was subjected to a heavier artillery fire, and, to make things still more uncomfortable, there was scarcely a night that the enemy did not sortie against the sapping trenches upon this forthill. And the trenches bore ample evidence of what they had gone through, for they were torn by bursting shells and scarred everywhere by the effect of the explosion of dynamite grenades thrown by sortie parties. At one point in the ascent we were shown a section which had been fiercely assaulted only a few nights previously. In spite of the repairs which had been made the place looked as if it had been struck by a cyclone. A hurried peep over the sand-bag wall showed us the body of a Russian officer in full uniform lying about twenty feet from the trench. He had been in command of the sortie party, and had been shot leading his men in a furious assault. So hot was the enemy's rifle fire at this point that it had been impossible to go near the place where the body lay, and it was consequently still unburied. A fairly stiff climb over the crest of the

hill brought us to the edge of the counterscarp of the moat at its north-west corner. The trench was full of soldiers, grimy, and with their uniforms covered with mud. They were the sappers who were engaged in sinking the series of mine shafts. It was an exceedingly unpleasant place to remain long, for every now and then the continual zipping of bullets over the battered sand-bag walls was varied by a loud explosion, followed by a shower of loose earth and small stones and a blinding cloud of yellow smoke. When the first one occurred it seemed at if one of the mines we had heard so much about had prematurely exploded, and we were quite prepared to do a quick run back. The officer who accompanied us, with an amused smile, explained that these explosions were quite a common occurrence, and were caused by dynamite grenades thrown by the enemy from behind the parapet of the fort over the moat at the trench-line upon the crest of the counterscarp. Sometimes they did damage, but not often, for the trench where the working parties were engaged was covered over with wire screens, so that when the grenade struck them it bounced harmlessly off to one side and exploded there. If we wished to go down into one of the manholes which was being excavated for the mines we could do so. The one immediately in front of us was the most interesting, because, in excavating, the sappers had come upon the concrete top of the caponier chamber about four feet under the surface. It had been necessary then to divert the shaft along the roof of the caponier about four feet, and then continue sinking it alongside the rear concrete wall of the chamber inset into the wall of the

counterscarp at that point. This caponier chamber was occupied by the enemy, who reached it through a subterranean tunnel from the fort under the bottom of the moat. There was only the thickness of the concrete roof and walls between the enemy in the chamber and the working parties in the mine shaft, so we were warned that we must not talk while in the hole, as the enemy might hear. All this was not calculated to increase our desire to go down into the hole which yawned in front of us, and out of which every few minutes grimy soldiers clambered with bags of earth upon their shoulders. Silently and cautiously we climbed down the bamboo ladder to the top of the caponier, which was laid deeply with bags and matting, so that footfalls upon it might make no sound that could be heard inside the chamber. A few steps brought us to the next descent into the deeper section of the shaft, which was about five feet in diameter. The officer went first, and in a few seconds we were standing upon the bottom, with three or four Japanese soldiers looking curiously at us in the dim light shed by a single lantern. The hole was about ten feet deep from the top of the caponier, and the work of excavating was just about finished. It was not a pleasant place, so we did not stay long. There were six other shafts like this being excavated along the front of the counterscarp, but this one was the most interesting, as it had been the first to be sunk and was closer to the caponier chamber than the similar one at the other corner of the moat. The intervening shafts were simply holes, excavated back of the brick wall of the counterscarp. The trip back through the trenches

to the headquarters of the brigade was safely accomplished.

The following day it was arranged that we should pay a visit to the trenches upon the counterscarp of the East Urhlung fort moat and see the work which was being done there. From the headquarters of the ninth division we were sent on to the eighteenth brigade headquarters, which were located quite close to the foot of the forthill and behind the railway embankment where the enemy had made his last stand after the capture of the Urhlung redoubt about two months before. On the way from the rear lines, which led through a deep donga the sides of which were littered with pieces of exploded shells, we passed close by the ruined Urhlung redoubt, and could see from the splendid location of the former Russian advance work the enormous difficulty of carrying it by storm, as had been attempted by the investing army in August. A short distance from the brigade headquarters we emerged from the donga, which up to this point had formed a natural leading trench, into a zig-zag line of made trenches which were cut through the ruined Chinese village of Palichuang. The village had been burned by the Russians in August, but the few trees which surrounded it were literally stripped of their branches by the effect of shell fire. The trench-line also showed that there had been some terrible struggles in its making, while all about were thousands of pieces of exploded shells which testified to the severity of the enemy's bombardment of the sap heads at various points during the time the trenches were made. From the brigade headquarters an officer was deputed to accompany us to the front

lines upon the counterscarp of the moat. Of all the sapping trenches in front of Port Arthur these had been the most difficult to construct. At no point from the base to the crest of the hill was there a covering of more than two feet of soil upon the solid rock, and in many places there was scarcely six inches. To have excavated the solid rock would have been an impossibility under the circumstances. For fully two hundred yards the trench-line had been practically upbuilt with sand-bags upon the surface of the slope. The Japanese soldier is not as tall as the average European. These sand-bag walls, being open to the concentrated artillery fire from the Russian position, were not made one inch higher than was absolutely necessary to protect the soldiers using them. The consequence was that we had to climb the hill through these trenches, doubled up, in order that we should not be seen over the top of the trench-walls, against which the enemy's riflemen kept up a steady sniping fire. An injudicious straightening of the back to relieve cramped muscles was immediately followed by the pinging of a dozen bullets, which buried themselves in the opposite wall of sand-bags. It did not appear to be any safer farther on either, for at points in the upward climb we had to flatten ourselves against the walls to allow stretchers to pass carrying wounded soldiers down to the hospitals. A little farther on we noticed quite a number of dead lying at the side of the trench covered over with bags. The front lines were much the same in construction as those of the West Urhlung fort. There were three lines of saps approaching the counterscarp of the moat, which had nearly double the front of the other

Urhlung fort. Between the heads of these trenches there was a lateral trench along the edge of the counterscarp. First we were taken to the east extremity of this lateral trench, and from it into a small sand-bag enclosure at the north-east corner which overlooked the front moat. It was a tremendous ditch, cut out of the solid rock, about forty feet deep and thirty feet wide. We were not allowed to have more than a hurried peep through the sand-bag wall, for the place was under a heavy rifle fire, and was a popular point for the Russians in the fort to throw grenades at. The lateral trench-line in front of the fort was crowded with sappers for its whole length. The look we had had into the moat, where the perpendicular counterscarp wall had been blasted and hewn out of the solid rock, showed that the work of sinking mine shafts to any depth close to the counterscarp was bound to be a most difficult and laborious undertaking. We came to one of these holes. It was just off the trench-line in a niche made of sand-bags and covered over the top with wire screens to protect the working parties from grenades. About five feet in diameter and scarcely four feet deep at the time, this shaft hole was literally filled with sappers sitting with their backs to the centre and their feet curled up under them tailor-fashion, each man working, as if his life depended upon it, with a short chisel and a hammer cutting out the flinty rock. It was a grotesque sight. There were six men in this small shaft. No other soldiers in the world could possibly have worked in such a cramped position, but it was the position the Japanese always take even when sitting in their own houses. Three of these holes were being excavated

in this manner through the solid rock, and I was told they had to be made ten feet deep before they would be ready for the mine charges.

At various points along the trench-line we saw soldiers with strange-shaped bags at the end of short bamboo poles, while others had pails of water and weird-looking wooden buckets or ladles with handles six or seven feet in length. Visible evidence of what they were doing was soon forthcoming. Something came over the trench-wall, and one of the soldiers armed with the bag at the end of a pole caught it and dumped bag and all into one of the pails of water. Two or three small automatic quick-firer shells, filled with some kind of burning powder, dropped upon the trench-wall of sand-bags, where they lay burning furiously until one of the men with a long-handled ladle soused them with water from one of the pails. This was a trick the Russians were adepts at, we were told. They placed eight or ten of these small shells, filled with some strong burning powder with short-time fuses attached to them, in a small bag. The fuses were then lighted and the whole thrown over the parapet of the fort across the moat on to the sand-bags which formed the Japanese trench-walls. But for the work done by this fire brigade, these shells full of burning powder would have set fire to the bags; and, as the bags burned away, of course the ground they contained would run out, and the trench-walls would simply melt away. This was only a sample of the difficulties which were encountered and had to be met and overcome when the Japanese saps were pushed close to the defensive works of the enemy. What with burning powder shells, dynamite grenades,

and a heavy rifle fire, with the danger always of shell fire also being turned upon the trenches, these front lines were not the sort of places in which one felt at all comfortable. Before starting on the return trip down the forthill we were warned that it was a great deal more dangerous going down than coming up, as the inclination was always to walk more erect, and an erect attitude at any time might mean a sniper's bullet through the head. In spite of the warning, heads were several times unconsciously shown above the trench-walls, and whenever they were, a dozen bullets sang past as a warning to the owner to get down lower. The starting-point was reached, and we were congratulated upon the fact that there had been no accidents, and told that there was an average of some fifty casualties a day in these trenches alone.

The next day after visiting the forthill we were told that upon the following day, the 17th, the mines in the counterscarp of the West Urhlung fort would be exploded. As a spectacle the explosion was not much, but it played havoc with the fort moat. One half of the counterscarp wall was tumbled into the ditch, filling it up to within about seven feet of the top. The other half of the wall remained intact, as the force of the explosion of the mines under that half had gone upwards instead of outwards. However, it was now possible to make approaches over the débris across the moat to the escarpment underneath the parapets. Three days later the mines in the counterscarp of the East Urhlung fort were also exploded. Because of the rock which had to be moved, and also on account of the partial failure of the explosions at the west fort, very heavy

charges were placed in the mine shafts. The result was a splendid success. The entire counterscarp wall, with the lateral trench of the Japanese as well, was tumbled into the ditch, with the result that it was filled to within a few feet of the top along the whole front of the fort. The sappers in front of both forts at once went to work running their trenches across the moats through the débris towards the escarpment underneath the fort walls, in order to begin the work of piercing mine shafts or tunnels under the parapets with the object of blowing up the forts.

When the sapping trenches at the East Urhlung fort reached the moat, the working parties found themselves under a heavy fire from two automatic quick-firers. It seemed that the explosion had not destroyed the caponier chamber at the north-west corner of the moat. The Russians, gaining the chamber through a tunnel from the fort underneath the moat, had made a small hole in the concrete roof, and upon the top had erected a sand-bag barricade behind which two automatic quick-firers had been mounted. This was decidedly awkward for the Japanese, because the moat upon the west side of the fort could be swept by the enemy's rifle fire. A couple of nights after, four sappers, entirely upon their own initiative, evolved a scheme for getting over the difficulty. Under cover of darkness they crawled from the trenches and made their way to the edge of the counterscarp immediately above the barricade of the Russians upon the roof of the caponier chamber some ten or fifteen feet below. There were none of the enemy in the barricade at the time. Removing his boots, one of the

sappers was quietly lowered by his comrade to the roof of the caponier with a rope. Working quickly, he took the two quick-firers off their tripods and had them hoisted up by the men above. The tripod stands followed, and in due course the sapper himself gained the top. The guns were safely removed to the Japanese trenches without the enemy knowing that it had been done. Encouraged by this clever piece of work, more of the sappers succeeded in placing a small mine under the wall of the caponier chamber and exploded it, blowing the whole affair, barricade and all, into the air. It was daring feats of this kind, more often than not evolved and executed by the rank and file, that gave the besieging army many an important advantage at critical moments.

About this time the extreme right wing of the army succeeded in driving the Russians out of Hokaton village by a surprise night-attack. This village was the most westerly of the Russian outpost lines, and the forward move made possible by the capture enabled the Japanese to advance their lines to the shores of Pigeon Bay.

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CHAPTER XX

The underground fighting in the caponier chambers and galleries under the counterscarp of the moat of the North Keekwan fort—The story of a month's strife with dynamite grenades—A trip to the fort moat, and a description of the scene of the sanguinary struggle—The desperate fight for possession of the Russian trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill—Casualties in the engineering and pioneer corps, and the arrival of reinforcements.

In all the fighting before Port Arthur there was none more sanguinary in character or more intensely interesting in its details than the struggle for possession of the enormously strong defences in the moat of the North Keekwan fort. For a little over a month day and night it continued, until the fort itself was blown up with dynamite and captured. The North Keekwan was one of the strongest guarding forts upon the foothills of the western half of the eastern ridge. It was essentially an infantry work, and mounted only automatic quick-firing and machine guns. The interior had several lines of protected infantry trenches behind the parapets, while in the rear section there were very strong concrete casemates and a large keep loopholed for infantry, automatic quick-firers, and machine guns. The moat was well constructed. It extended around the four sides of the fort, and was thirty feet wide and twenty feet deep. Built into the walls of the counterscarp upon the north and east fronts were heavy concrete caponier chambers and galleries, loopholed for infantry, automatic quick-firers, and

machine guns, so that the moat could be swept by their fire upon three sides. Communication between the fort and these moat defences was had through a tunnel underneath the moat. There were in all three caponiers, or caponier chambers. Two were built partly out into the moat at its north-east and north-west corners, while the third was a short distance from the south-east corner, at the point where the tunnel ran underneath the moat into the fort. These chambers were loopholed for automatic quick-firers and machine guns which could sweep the moat on three sides with their fire. Long galleries, inset into the counterscarp so that their front walls were flush with its perpendicular face, connected the three chambers. The front walls of these galleries were loopholed for infantry, and it was estimated that a garrison of two hundred men could be utilized in manning them. Upon the north front the gallery connecting the caponier chambers in either corner was subdivided into alcoves with only a narrow entrance between them, so that each alcove could be defended separately in case of an enemy effecting entrance to the defensive works. On the east front, however, there were no alcoves, only one gallery about eighty yards in length connecting the caponier chamber in the north-east corner of the moat with the one near the south-east corner. All these underground works were built of concrete between six and seven feet thick, although they were almost entirely inset underneath the counterscarp walls of the moat. The fort with its ditch defences had a garrison of about five hundred men.

The besieging army, as can be readily imagined, had an exceedingly difficult task in running their

sapping trenches up this forthill. When they reached the crest the enemy's artillery fire was concentrated upon the trenches to such an extent that it was found quite impossible to continue them in the ordinary manner. Instead, tunnels, or covered-in trenches, were run towards the counterscarp of the moat. The enemy soon discovered this expedient, and at once began counter-tunnels from the moat under those of the Japanese. The sappers had succeeded in approaching to within about ten feet of the edge of the counterscarp at the north-west corner of the moat on the 23rd of October, when the Russians exploded a mine in their counter-tunnel underneath. A considerable section of the Japanese approaches with a small working party were blown to pieces, but the mine, though effective, had been badly laid, for the force of the explosion made a small hole in the concrete roof of the caponier chamber at that corner of the moat. Utilizing the excavation made by the force of the explosion, the Japanese sappers succeeded in running their tunnel up to the small hole in the roof of the caponier chamber. A machine gun was brought up, and with the aid of its fire the enemy was compelled to evacuate the chamber. The hole was then enlarged, and sand-bags were dropped through on to the concrete floor below, until a sufficient barricade was made to afford shelter from the enemy's fire. After suffering a good many casualties in dropping through the hole to the shelter behind the barricade, the sappers finally succeeded in establishing a foothold inside the caponier chamber. The Russians retired to the first alcove in the caponier gallery, and from behind a barricade of sand-bags

built up across the narrow entrance, they threw dynamite hand-grenades at the intruders. While the general assault on the 30th of October was in progress, the troops of the besieging army succeeded in running a second sapping tunnel up to the edge of the counterscarp of the moat at its north-east corner. The same night the concrete roof of the caponier chamber was uncovered and a small hole made in it. With the aid of a machine gun the enemy was forced to evacuate this chamber, as they had already been compelled to evacuate the one at the north-west corner of the moat. It was, however, impossible to occupy the chamber in the same manner as the first had been occupied, because it was swept with fire from two directions by the enemy, in the first alcove of the caponier gallery on the north front, and by those in the long gallery on the east front. During the night of the following day the sappers dynamited a hole through the front wall of the caponier chamber in the north-west corner, and through it gained access to the moat. Crawling along close to the north counterscarp wall underneath the infantry loopholes, they succeeded in making a small hole in the front wall of the alcove in the caponier gallery, next to the chamber which was swept with rifle and machine-gun fire by the Japanese from the hole made in its roof from the sapping trenches on the counterscarp the previous day. Thus the enemy was driven out of the first alcove in the gallery upon the north front, but the Japanese were unable to enter the alcove either, as its interior was made untenable owing to the rifle fire from the Russians in the second alcove, who had erected a sand-bag barricade across the narrow entrance between

the two alcoves. This was where Japanese ingenuity and daring won a great advantage for them. A couple of sand-bags were pushed from the moat through the aperture made in the front wall of the first alcove. It was only about fifteen feet from the hole to the entrance to the second alcove across which was the enemy's barricade. With his head against the two sand-bags which had been pushed through the hole in the wall, a sapper lay upon his back so that his comrades could push both him and the sand-bags over the concrete floor his full length from the aperture. More bags and more sappers went through the hole in the same way. As they were pushed farther from the hole than the length of one soldier, a second lay upon his back, and, placing his head against the feet of the first, was shoved through his full length, so that the sand-bags were then the full length of two soldiers from the aperture in the direction of the Russian barricade, the sand-bag wall being upbuilt and manned as it progressed in this manner. It was terrible work, for the enemy freely used dynamite grenades until the interior was so filled with dust and the fumes of the explosive that a perfect screen covered the forward progress of the wall. Before they realized it, the Japanese barricade was within a few feet of that of the enemy. In a short time the Russians were compelled to evacuate the second alcove, which became neutral ground, the entrances on either side being the firing lines of the opposing forces. It was now a comparatively easy matter for the sappers in their trenches upon the counterscarp above to enlarge the hole made in the roof of the caponier chamber and lower sand-bags,

so that in a short time they had driven the enemy from his barricade across the entrance between the chamber and the long gallery upon the east front. After being compelled to retire at this point the Russians established themselves behind a second sand-bag wall across the long gallery, about twenty yards from the entrance to the chamber which had been occupied by the Japanese. The Russians in the intervening alcoves, between the caponier chambers in the north-east and north-west corners of the moat along its north front, were now in a most unfortunate position. Their retreat was cut off in every direction, and the Japanese were gradually closing in from two sides. In the meantime, while all this was going on, other parties of sappers were busily engaged building a sand-bag wall across the moat from the caponier chamber in the north-east corner to the corner of the escarpment, thus shutting off communication between the moat on its north and east fronts. The Russians also built a sand-bag wall across the moat on its east side from the caponier chamber near the south-east corner to the escarpment. It was obvious that whichever side succeeded in bringing the fire of a heavy gun against the sand-bag wall of their opponents first, would have the advantage. This was where the Japanese again scored. They had brought down into the moat, through the first caponier chamber occupied, a mountain gun in pieces. This gun had been fully mounted while the wall was being built, and was ready for use immediately. With the first peep of dawn they opened fire upon the Russian wall and gradually battered it to pieces. Vainly efforts were made by the enemy to remedy

their mistake by bringing down a small field gun in sections and putting it together behind their rapidly disappearing wall so as to open fire against the Japanese at the other extremity of the east front of the moat. The Japanese fire was so heavy that they were compelled to abandon the effort. The troops of the besieging army thus had possession of the fort moat upon the whole of the north front, for the Russians shut up in the intervening alcoves of the gallery upon that front were speedily closed in upon and killed to a man. This, briefly, was the position of affairs upon the 20th of November, when permission for a few of the correspondents was obtained to visit the fort moat and see what was being done.

From the headquarters of the eleventh division we made our way through the leading trenches in the direction of the forthill. Though the actual distance was not more than three-quarters of a mile we were compelled to walk through nearly two miles of trenches, which approached the forthill in a circuitous, zig-zag manner so that they could not be enfiladed by the fire of the fortress artillery. These trenches were exceedingly well made, and were broad and deep enough to permit of both guns and troops being taken through them with considerable rapidity. The ground through which they ran was, generally speaking, a stiff heavy red clay, so that the amount of work involved in their construction must have been enormous. The struggle for the moat defences of the fort was being carried on at this time by the twenty-second regiment of the tenth brigade of the eleventh division, and our first objective was the headquarters of this regiment. On the

way we passed no less than five parallels, or cross lines of trenches, which intersected the leading saps at intervals in their progress towards the forthill. The headquarters of the regiment were located in the sixth parallel just underneath the crest of the hill, and about two hundred yards from the scene of operations in the fort moat. The Colonel received us most cordially, and with apparent frankness talked about the awful time the troops had in working their saps from this point onward. When an attempt was made to run the trenches over the crest of the hill towards the fort moat, the opposition of the enemy was so determined and their artillery fire so heavy that it was found to be quite impossible to proceed in the ordinary way with open saps. Instead, the pioneers were compelled to tunnel their way underground in the direction of the moat. On the way the wires of eight electric contact mines were discovered and cut. For some reason or other, probably because the cables had been too long under ground, the contact had been destroyed. Had the enemy been able to explode them at the proper time, the Colonel frankly admitted that the losses among the working parties would have been enormous. Even as it was, great difficulties were encountered in getting over this short distance between the sixth parallel and the counterscarp of the moat. One of the engineer officers kindly volunteered to take us on to the scene of operations. In order to do away with the necessity for artificial light, the tunnels through which the approaches were first made had been converted into very deep open trenches with head-cover only at intervals. The trench led up to a huge hole blasted through

heavy concrete, out of which grimy, dust-covered soldiers were continually passing and repassing. This was the entrance which had been made into the caponier chamber under the counterscarp at the north-east corner of the moat. Immediately inside was a square room with a low vaulted roof. On either side were narrow entrances leading into the galleries. The front walls were loopholed, and at those looking along the moat on the east side of the fort were two machine guns. The whole place was crowded with soldiers. There was a breach in the wall looking out into the moat on the north front of the fort, through which we could see a party of sappers working at an excavation in the escarpment under the fort wall. Anxious to see what this ditch or moat looked like, we drew closer to the breach. It extended along the north front of the fort, and was about twenty-five feet wide at the bottom. Suddenly there was a tremendous explosion quite close to the hole near which we were standing. The interior of the chamber was immediately filled with smoke and fine concrete dust. A dynamite grenade had been thrown over the parapet of the fort and had exploded not ten feet away. It was evident that the moat was not by any means a safe place, though the sappers working at the mine shaft which was being pierced under the fort walls seemed to be safe enough. Carefully we picked our way through two or three of the alcoves in the long gallery which extended under the counterscarp upon the north front. They were, like the chamber we had first entered, very heavily built of concrete with vaulted roofs. The impression conveyed was one of enormous strength. Everywhere there was

evidence of the awful struggle which had taken place for possession of these underground chambers. Broken sand-bag walls partially blocked some of the entrances, and in the centre alcoves there were piles of bodies, both Japanese and Russian, most of them horribly mutilated by the explosion of dynamite bombs. Into the long gallery on the east side we were not permitted to go, because its farther end was still held by the enemy. No chamber of horrors could have more clearly conveyed the impression of the terrible nature of the sanguinary struggle which had been going on for nearly a month for possession of these vaulted concrete cellars. There was a distinct atmosphere of death and danger of death about the whole place. The faces of the officers and soldiers on duty wore that tense, watchful expression that comes when men know that they are in imminent danger of more than the enemy's bullets. There had been more than one disastrous mine explosion in these same galleries, and it was evident that there was much apprehension that others might come at any moment. It was not comfortable to visit the place for even one short half-hour, but to have been compelled to remain there as these officers and soldiers had, day and night facing death in its most terrible form, demanded a courage with a peculiar quality of patience that one could not help noticing was possessed in a marked degree by the Japanese soldiers.

When we returned to the headquarters of the regiment the Colonel told us about an incident which had occurred the night of the general assault upon October 30th, which gives a good idea of one phase of the nature of the fighting which took

place around this particular fort. Late that evening a Japanese officer with half a dozen ground scouts crawled from the trenches upon the counterscarp of the moat and proceeded along the east slopes of the forthill, in order to reconnoitre the position of the enemy in trenches at the rear of the fort. A number of Russians under command of an officer started about the same time from their trenches, with the same object in view regarding the Japanese position upon the north front of the fort. Both parties were in the open on neutral ground which could be swept by rifle fire from the opposing trenches and the fort as well. While crawling along in the darkness, each in advance of his men, the officers found themselves looking into one another's eyes. Recognition was mutual and instantaneous. The Russian officer tried to draw his sword, but before he had time to do so his opponent, who had some knowledge of jiu-jitsu, the science of Japanese wrestling, caught him without rising from his knees, and by a trick succeeded in throwing him over his head. Before the Russian recovered from the surprise and effect of the fall, he was despatched by his opponent's sword. All this happened so quickly and quietly that the soldiers who were following the Russian officer knew nothing about it until they came across the dead body. Meantime the Japanese were quickly crawling back to the cover of their trenches, knowing well that the slightest sound would bring the fire of hundreds of rifles upon them. The Russian soldiers, with that splendid courage they so often displayed during the siege, instead of doing likewise, followed their enemy, and succeeded in killing two before rifle fire from

the Japanese trenches was opened upon them. All but two of the small party were killed within a dozen yards of the trenches.

The announcement was made by the Army Headquarters, on the afternoon of the 22nd, that it was the intention the following day to capture the Russian trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill, so that there would be no possibility of a repetition during the next general assault of the disaster which this trench-line had been responsible for in the last big attack upon the 30th of October. A new attacking parallel capable of holding an entire regiment had been excavated within thirty yards of that of the enemy. The assault would be made in force, and as soon as the nearest section was taken the assaulting troops would strongly entrench themselves and work through the trenches, east and west, in an endeavour to gain possession of the whole line which belted the hill from the east to the west gorges. The Japanese artillery began a desultory bombardment about noon. At three o'clock in the afternoon the fire was concentrated upon the trench-line to be assaulted, and continued increasing in volume until half-past five o'clock, when the divisional artillery opened with shrapnel, which played in sheets of flame over the enemy's trenches. The attacking infantry, a battalion strong, emerged from their parallel about six o'clock and charged across the thirty yards which separated them from the enemy. They were met with a terrible rifle and machine-gun fire, but finally succeeded in reaching the opposite trench, which they first deluged with dynamite grenades, and then assaulted with bayonets. The Russians fought

with splendid spirit and were only driven out of a small section. The successful assaulters at once began to erect traverse walls of sand-bags, which were battered down by automatic quick-firers, posted by the enemy farther along the trench-line almost as soon as they were erected. Sappers were also set to work excavating a connecting trench between the captured section of the Russian line and their own parallel. The enemy was reinforced, and made a strong counter-attack about nine o'clock. The fighting was absolutely hand to hand with grenades and bayonets. For half an hour it lasted, and then the Japanese were slowly driven back to their attacking parallel, fighting every inch of the way at close quarters. More reinforcements were brought up, and at eleven o'clock another furious onslaught was made upon the same section of the enemy's trench. Again the Russians were driven out after twenty minutes' desperate work with bayonets and grenades. For a second time the Japanese began the work of entrenching themselves, so as to be able to retain the foothold they had gained at such heavy cost in life. The Russians, however, were equally determined that their opponents should not be allowed to retain a permanent foothold, for that in the end would mean the capture of the battery position upon the crest of the hill, one of the vital points of the line of defence at that section of their position. The successful assaulters were again attacked from two sides about one o'clock in the morning, and after an hour's desperate resistance were forced to retire to their parallel for a second time. The fight had by this time lasted almost continuously for seven hours, and

the thirty yards which separated the two trench-lines was literally piled with the dead. The Japanese losses were two hundred and fifty killed and wounded, and the Russian dead were estimated at two hundred. During the later assaults the bodies of the dead were used on both sides as shelters and barricades. This was one of the most desperate and sanguinary encounters that took place during the siege. The ferocity displayed was terrible. Some of the dead were actually hacked to pieces with swords and bayonets.

The losses in the engineering and pioneer battalions up to this time had been enormous. In the first division the colonel commanding the engineering corps had been killed in the trenches upon the slopes of the West Urhlung forthill, and out of two companies of three hundred pioneers each there were only sixty men fit for duty. In the ninth division all the officers of the engineering corps had been either killed or wounded, and the rank and file so reduced in numbers that their work had to be done by the regular troops of the division. In the eleventh division the losses had not been so heavy as in the other two, but the desperate work of gaining possession of the strong defences of the North Keekwan fort moat had resulted in a large number of casualties among the engineers and pioneer corps. In order to bring these battalions up to something like their normal strength three companies of pioneers were sent down from the armies in the north, and the first and twelfth companies of the second reserves of the engineering corps from Japan were also added to the strength of the various divisions.

CHAPTER XXI

The third great tragedy in front of Port Arthur, the unsuccessful general assault of the 26th of November—The awful slaughter which attended efforts to carry the guarding forts by storm—The desperate fighting during the night—Major-General Nakamura's disastrous attempt to carry the supporting fort of West Urhlung by assault—The crisis which followed, and the refusal of the Headquarters Staff of the Army to allow the results to be made public.

THE very evident disappointment and dissatisfaction felt in Japan over the failure of the army sooner to make an end of the Port Arthur siege had a great deal to do with the making of the third premature and disastrous general assault upon the enemy's position. Doubtless there were reasons of a military nature as well which appeared a sufficient justification to the Army Staff for ordering the assault at the time. One certainly was a mistaken idea with regard to the numerical strength of the garrison. Not only was it publicly announced at this time that the Russian force had been carefully estimated at from ten to twelve thousand effective fighting men, but there was evidence to show that the Headquarters Staff believed in the accuracy of the estimate. This reason alone, however, was not sufficient to account for the attack being brought on when it was. It is true that considerable progress had been made in bettering the position of the besieging army for attack since the last disastrous attempt had been made at the end of October. Still, had military reasons alone entered into the decision,

the hundreds of Japanese dead which still covered the forthills and slopes of the ridge in rear was good evidence of the measure of failure which had attended the last attack only a few weeks before. But the strongest proof that the assault was premature from a military standpoint is to be found in the fact that even at the time it was decided upon every one of the guarding forts was being successfully mined. No better reason for delay could have been found, for the blowing up of the forts first would almost have ensured success. But it was evident long before the time that there was going to be no waiting, even if there were sound military reasons for so doing. The feeling of irritation was general. The good name of the army at home had to be vindicated. That could best be done by taking the enemy's position by assault. Everyone was ready, the rank and file quite as ready as the officers. The preparatory work that had to be done was executed with what might be called feverish haste. The moats of the two Urhlung forts had been partially filled up, but to make the passage of assaulting parties to the fort parapets easier, wooden bridges had been constructed upon heavy timber piers over which fifteen men could walk abreast. The whole of the moat upon the north side of the North Keekwan fort was in possession of the Japanese, and there was a splendid approach for assaulting parties from the sapping trenches through the captured caponier chambers. Easy approaches were made up to the parapets from the moat level. The attempts made to capture and hold the trench-line which belted the big East Keekwan Hill had been a failure. Two well-protected attacking

parallels had been excavated close to the Chinese Wall, one upon the upper slopes of Hachimakiyama, about thirty-five yards distant from the enemy's defences, and the other in rear of the two Panlung forts, about the same distance from the wall. This was the position occupied when it was officially announced at Army Headquarters, on the afternoon of the 25th, that a general assault would be made the following day upon the enemy's line of defence from the big East Keekwan Hill to the West Urhlung fort, including the two Urhlung forts, the North Keekwan fort, the "Q" battery position, and the East Keekwan Hill.

The attack was preceded by a heavy bombardment, which was commenced by the siege train opening with a heavy concentrated fire against the guarding forts about ten o'clock. About one o'clock the explosion of a mine in the moat of the North Keekwan fort, which blew away a small section of the parapet, was the preconcerted signal for attack. Up to this time only the heavier guns had been playing upon the portion of the enemy's position which it was intended to assault. The divisional artillery was ready waiting, for along with the simultaneous advance of the assaulting parties, a perfect storm of shrapnel was turned on to the points of attack. At the East and West Urhlung forts the storming parties reached the parapets under a heavy artillery and rifle fire, apparently without heavy losses. Twenty minutes later many of those who had entered the West Urhlung fort could be seen running back over the parapet in a panic, and shell after shell from the fortress batteries upon the Itzeshan and An-tzu-shan forts landed among

them. The Russian practice was wonderful, and scores of the assaulters were blown to atoms during the ten or fifteen minutes the awful shell fire lasted. At the East Urhlung fort the storming party remained inside the work, evidently in the first line of trenches beyond the outer parapet. The assaulting party from the attacking parallel upon the rear slope of Hachimakiyama succeeded, by a spirited charge, in penetrating a short trench-line about one hundred yards in front of the Russian main line of defence, the Chinese Wall. This short trench-line was but one of three constructed in the form of a square in front of the main line of defence, in order to prevent its being easily carried by assault. For a short time the Japanese stubbornly held the foothold they had gained in this short trench in spite of the heavy converging fire which was poured in upon them from the rear and two sides, but in the end they were forced back to their parallels after having sustained heavy losses. The assault from the attacking trenches in rear of the two Panlung forts did not accomplish anything. Twice attempts were made to charge over the thirty yards which lay between the two points, but the ground was difficult and the assaulters were forced each time to retire, principally owing to the terrible fire poured in upon them from machine guns cleverly placed upon the slopes of the ridge in rear of the Chinese Wall.

Meantime the attacks upon the North Keekwan fort, the "Q" battery position, and the trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill were also going on under cover of a heavy bombardment of shrapnel from the divisional artillery

and heavy shells from the 11-inch howitzers. The attacking force against the North Keekwan fort was about a battalion, and the assaulting column, which made its way from the moat over the parapets, about a company. Just as the attack commenced there was a heavy explosion inside the fort, evidently caused by a magazine being struck with a high-explosive shell. When they reached the parapets the assaulting parties came under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from inside, as well as an enfilading fire from the Chinese Wall in rear of the fort and the "Q" battery position to the east. The assault was made in two columns, one at the north-east corner and the other upon the north front. The column upon the north-east corner encountered wires upon the crest of the parapet, and was compelled to retire again to the moat after a futile attempt to make a breach in the wires. The column upon the north front twice essayed to gain the inside, but each time was forced to retire and seek cover in an excavation made by the explosion of the mine which had served as the signal for the beginning of the attack. The assault upon the "Q" battery position was one of the most brilliant pieces of work done during the day. The storming party had only about twenty-five yards to go, but it was a steep climb to a five-foot wall, which also had to be scaled. About a company started, but only a score reached the wall; the rest were put out of action by the awful fire which met them, or were compelled to retire to the parallel. Another rush was made, and two dozen men clambered over the wall. There was some bayonet work in full view upon the top of the wall, and the

assaulters disappeared inside the work. They did not reappear, for they were bayoneted to a man.

A storming party of about two companies advanced under a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and succeeded in occupying the section of the enemy's trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill, which had already been so many times captured and recaptured that it came to be known as "the tragedy trench." This practically ended the first phase of the general assault, and for half an hour or more there was little or no movement anywhere along the line. The only advantage gained by the assaulters was the occupation of a section of the trench-line upon the East Keekwan Hill, and a precarious foothold in the trenches behind the outer parapet of the East Urhlung fort.

Things began to get active again about four o'clock, and from that time on until almost daylight next morning there was the most furious series of assaults along the whole line that could possibly be imagined. During the pause in the fighting the Japanese had brought up to the front lines, in spite of the terrible bombardment they were subjected to from the fortress artillery, every available man of their forces. Afterwards we learned that as these reserve troops reached the forward trenches every regiment was ordered to fix bayonets, whether it went immediately into attack or not. To the rank and file we knew this meant that there could be no going back, that the positions had to be taken no matter at what cost in life. The desperate nature of the attempts which were subsequently made, and the determination shown after repeated and costly

repulses during ten or twelve hours' fighting, is evidence of the spirit in which all the order to fix bayonets means with Western troops was received by the rank and file. Many times I had seen these same troops attack before, but never like this. As often as they were hurled back to their trenches by a perfect avalanche of Russian fire, did they again charge, until they at last succeeded in penetrating the enemy's defences. The Russian garrison fought at close quarters with bayonets and grenades as they had always fought during the siege, with a sustained stubbornness and courage which was magnificent, dying in hundreds at their posts rather than yield an inch to the intruders. Towards the end it was literally a struggle to the death on both sides.

The captors of the section of the enemy's trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill appeared to be maintaining their foothold under a heavy shrapnel and rifle fire, while the Japanese divisional artillery deluged the two extremities of the trench-line on either side of the captured section with shrapnel. From the parallel in front of the Kobu entrenched hill and that under the "Q" battery position, assault followed assault in efforts to pierce the Chinese Wall in the gorge on the west side of the East Keekwan Hill, and secure an entrance into the "Q" position. Strong assaulting columns swarmed up the walls of the North Keekwan fort and endeavoured to establish a foothold inside the parapets. Time and time again we saw them gain the top only to drop in dozens from the rifle and machine-gun fire from the interior, and the equally deadly enfilading fire from the "Q" position. Just before

dark the Japanese succeeded in placing a battery of mountain guns upon the "P" entrenched hill, which lies immediately to the west, for the purpose of bombarding the gorge of the fort and the "Q" position. These guns were subjected to a heavy fire from the fortress artillery upon the crest of the East Keekwan Hill, and for a time there was a duel between these guns and those of the Japanese siege train, which tried to silence their fire against the battery upon the "P" hill, which, however, succeeded in doing splendid work by its point-blank fire. In rear of the Panlung forts assaulters could be seen in scores climbing the Chinese Wall and engaging the enemy with bayonets and grenades. Two or three times they were hurled back, but finally a small party gained the farther side of the wall. Dozens followed, being shoved up and pushed over by those behind. At last the enceinte had been pierced, but it was not taken by any means. This was no ordinary trench-line that once pierced could then be rushed. Along its entire length it was traversed, so that every twenty yards or so it had to be taken in detail, the short traverse walls being used by the defenders. A number of sections had been taken late in the afternoon, and we could see the Japanese soldiers upon the slopes of the ridge in rear throwing hand-grenades into the uncaptured sections. Upon the upper slopes of the Hachimakiyama entrenched hill the square of trenches in front of the Chinese Wall had been captured, and a strong assaulting column had tried to pierce the enceinte; but machine guns well placed upon the ridge in rear, which was low at this point, swept their ranks with a murderously effective fire. This struggle

went on all afternoon, until just a little before dark a small section of the wall was in possession of the assaulters, and desperate efforts were being made to drive the Russians out of the sections between the traverse walls to the point where the enceinte was first pierced in rear of the two Panlung forts. For three hours this section of the Chinese Wall was hidden in a haze of smoke from bursting dynamite bombs. From the number of men who gained the trench inside the outer parapet of the East Urhlung fort, just before dark, it became evident that an effort was being made to assemble a sufficiently strong force in this trench to make an assault upon the interior from there. A portion of the covering of the parapet had been removed, so that the men could gain this outer trench without showing themselves upon the top. The assaulting columns at the West Urhlung fort had a terrible time during the afternoon. Following the first, four different attempts did the assaulting columns make to advance from the moat and secure a foothold inside the parapets. In addition to the rifle and machine-gun fire which greeted them from the interior as soon as they appeared upon the parapets, the fortress guns upon the An-tzu-shan and Itzeshan forts landed shell after shell in their midst, and one could see whole batches of men being blown to atoms. The Russians in the trench-line upon the East Keekwan Hill massed about six o'clock in the evening, and delivered a strong counter-attack upon the Japanese holding the small section of the trench-line captured earlier in the afternoon, and after a short and sharp fight succeeded in recapturing it. This was about the position of affairs when

night cast her mantle of darkness over the scene of strife.

The assault—or series of assaults, for the fighting was along a mile and a half of front—was only beginning to assume its most desperate phase about nightfall. For hours afterwards the scene was terrible in the extreme. The entire front of the ridge was lighted up with sheets of flame from bursting shells, and the guarding forts resembled nothing more closely than the craters of active volcanoes. The incessant rifle fire was broken in upon every few minutes by the rattle of machine guns, the popping of automatic quick-firers, and the roaring of big guns.

The assaulting force in front of the Russian trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill advanced about nine o'clock in the evening, and after twenty minutes of hand-to-hand encounters, with bayonets and hand-grenades, succeeded in again occupying the eighty-yard section of trench out of which they had been driven three hours before. Strong parties of reserves were immediately rushed forward, and an effort was made to work east and west along the line from the captured section. The Russians were, however, prepared for a strong move in this direction. They had excavated deep military pits, which filled up the entire width of the trench at points both east and west from the section in front of the Japanese parallel. These pits were filled with burning coal, and past them the assaulters were unable to go. All the time Russian machine guns posted upon the farther side of these impassable barriers poured an awful fire into the assaulters whenever an attempt was made to approach the pits. The

Japanese succeeded in erecting sand-bag walls across the trench, in front of the obstacles, in order to enable them to retain the foothold they had won. It was useless however, for the enemy succeeded in battering down the walls with automatic quick-firers, and between two and three o'clock in the morning advanced and slowly retook the captured section of their trench-line, which was literally piled with bodies, as was also the thirty yards of ground which lay between the two lines. No troops could have put up a more splendid defence than the Russians did at this point. They had nothing more than an open trench with occasional head-cover to protect them from the Japanese artillery fire, and were compelled to resist assaults without number made in a spirit of the fiercest determination. Without the trench-line the crest of the hill could not be taken, for the Japanese knew well that any such attempt would simply mean a repetition of the tragedy which occurred during the October attack. At this point, therefore, the attempt had utterly failed.

Four or five different attempts were made during the night to rush the Chinese Wall at the top of the gorge west of the East Keekwan Hill, simultaneously with attempts to storm the "Q" battery position upon the same slope a little farther west. At every attempt the Russian rifles and machine guns simply blazed, and, try as they would, the assaulters were unable to succeed, though both positions were lurid with the flames from bursting shells sent from the Japanese divisional artillery and siege train.

The North Keekwan fort had but a single trench-line behind the parapets, and this was

The Russian "Q" Battery Position. Damage done by Japanese Shell Fire.

strongly held. The moment assaulting parties showed themselves above the parapet they were met with volleys from the trench. Four times we saw, silhouetted against a background of smoke and in the light from bursting shells, parties vainly attempting to gain a foothold inside the fort. Finally, at the north-east corner, a small party managed to reach the trench. Reinforcements swarmed up the north wall, and in a few minutes the trench-line was in possession of the assaulters. A strong storming party was then massed inside the parapet, and an attempt was made to rush the interior, but machine guns in protected case-mates at the rear of the fort mowed down the soldiers as fast as they left cover of the captured trench. For six hours this fight went on. As fast as men were put out of action more took their places. Several lines of interior defences were carried by fighting at close quarters with bayonets and grenades. The garrison behaved with splendid courage, meeting the assaulters hand to hand. The captured works were literally piled with dead, Japanese and Russian layer upon layer. The dawn saw the Japanese in possession only of the north trench inside the parapet, the rest of the fort having resisted the most furious attempts at capture, principally owing to the splendid work done by the machine guns in the rear.

The success which had attended the efforts of the troops of the ninth division in piercing the Chinese Wall back of Hachimakiyama led to the evolution of a daring plan to sequester and render more easy the capture of the two Urhlung forts. Directly behind West Urhlung there was a second fort which was known as the supporting fort of

West Urhlung. It was situated upon the western extremity of the ridge in rear of the Chinese Wall at its lowest point, so that it was only upon a slightly higher level than the two Urhlung forts upon the foothills of the ridge in front, with the Chinese Wall running between. The plan was for a considerable body of troops to advance into the gorge of the Shuishi Valley and attack this supporting fort upon the west side, while at the same time an attempt should be made to push troops through the captured section of the Chinese Wall in rear of Hachimakiyama and attack the fort upon its east side. The success of the plan would mean the capture of the western extremity of the ridge and the Chinese Wall, thus sequestering the two Urhlung forts upon the foothills in front, and make it possible to assault them both front and rear. In pursuance of this plan, a column of two thousand soldiers, who had volunteered for this dangerous undertaking, massed just south of the village of Shuishi. They were led by Major-General Nakamura, the Commander of the second brigade of the first division. General Nogi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, was present to see the experiment made. Unfortunately for its success the column was located by the enemy's searchlights almost as soon as it started, and was heavily shelled. The slopes of the ridge were reached, however, and the soldiers began the ascent, while upon the north front the troops of the ninth division attempted to approach the same fort upon the east front from the rear slopes of Hachimakiyama. Simultaneously, desperate assaults were made upon the interior of the two Urhlung forts. For two hours the many-sided fight lasted. It was the

last great effort to break the Russian line of defence. Though it was evident that the enemy had massed their reserves to meet the advance of General Nakamura's column, they did not open fire until the Japanese were within a short distance of the fort. Then they met them with volley after volley of rifle fire, while machine guns, posted in positions which enabled them to sweep the slope, vomited a deadly hail into the advancing ranks. For two hours the assaulters vainly endeavoured to reach the enemy's fort. General Nakamura was slightly wounded. Finally, a retirement was ordered, and a thousand came down where two thousand went up the hill. Next morning about six hundred bodies could be seen littering the hill-slope, as evidence of the terrible failure of the last desperate effort made upon that awful night. Meantime the troops of the ninth division were having an equally hard time in attempting to attack the east front of the supporting fort, owing to the heavy machine-gun fire which was poured into their advance from the crest of the ridge in rear of the Chinese Wall. Again and again they tried to reach their objective, but just as often were they compelled to retire.

The fighting all this time in the two forts upon the foothills in front was just as desperate and quite as unsuccessful. A short time after dark the Japanese succeeded in massing a strong storming party inside the outer parapet of the East Urhlung fort. Six or seven assaults were made. The garrison fought hand to hand with bayonets and grenades. The fighting lasted until midnight. At one time the Japanese had taken practically the whole of the north or lower section of the fort,

but were repulsed again and again in their efforts to gain a foothold upon the higher or rear section. It was upon this higher section that the machine guns and automatic quick-firers were mounted in positions where they were able to sweep the whole interior and the outer parapets as well with their fire. The lower section of the fort was literally piled with dead. This was by all means the most desperate of the fights in the fort interiors.

While the assaulting party under Major-General Nakamura was engaged in storming the supporting fort, the assaulting column in front of the West Urhlung fort succeeded in gaining a foothold in the interior. Long after midnight a hand-to-hand fight was going on inside, in which both sides lost heavily. Finally the assaulters were compelled to retire, though they still held an entrenched position inside the north parapet.

The scene at the western end of the ridge during these four simultaneous attacks could not be adequately described. The entire end of the ridge was literally an inferno. When the assault upon the supporting fort was at its height, Russian shrapnel from the An-tzu-shan fort across the gorge of the Shuishi Valley, and from the Paiyushan fort at its extreme end close to Port Arthur, was bursting in sheets of flame over the slopes of the ridge in front of the fort. By the light shed one could see the broken ranks of the assaulters still pressing onward and upward, the shrapnel and machine-gun fire cutting great swathes through them every moment. No language could paint the picture, for while it might be possible to describe snatches of it at different points and at different times, the whole scene with its hours of kaleidoscopic changes

made up a composite picture which beggared description. Until the grim grey dawn of morning cast a luminous haze over the scene the struggle lasted, then ceased; and, even without knowing all the facts, one could feel that again the besieging army had been broken, despite its wonderful unexampled courage and persistence. The brighter light later on showed dimly the outlines of the parapets of the guarding forts, silhouetted against the darker background of the ridge, giving off clouds of smoke and dust as evidence of the ordeal they had passed through.

The following day the Japanese were compelled to evacuate every position they had won in this awful fight, which had lasted almost continuously from one o'clock at noon until daylight the next morning. Their casualties ran to between twelve and fifteen thousand. At Army Headquarters the staff officers seemed to be more utterly bewildered and depressed than at any time before during the siege. It was pathetic to watch the regimental officers and the rank and file. They were not bad losers considering all they had lost, but never before had they been so determined to win, and it was easy to see that this last terrible effort had cost them much of their usual confidence. It was not permitted to send away even a hint of the disaster which had occurred. The reason given was that the assault was not yet over. It would be continued at once in an attempt to take 203 Metre Hill. As soon as that position was taken, all details of what had just occurred might be telegraphed. The object of this, of course, was obvious. It was impossible to allow the news of another disaster before Port Arthur to reach

the public in Japan, for feeling there already ran very high over the repeated failures of the army to make any marked impression upon the enemy's position. News of a victory must be sent out with the story of the disaster, and that victory would have to be of sufficient importance to deprive the present catastrophe of its great significance. This was the spirit in which the fourth act in the tragedy was entered upon by the Army Staff. The scene of strife was changed in a few hours, for the same evening the first assault was made upon the enemy's position upon 203 Metre Hill. Along the eastern front not a shot was fired, and only the stretcher-bearers were busy collecting the wounded.

CHAPTER XXII

The last act in the tragedy, the capture of 203 Metre Hill and Akasakayama—The story of an eight-days' series of continuous assaults—The awful baptism of fire given the seventh division—The unsuccessful assault of the 30th of November—The wonderful work done by the big howitzers—The successful attack upon the 5th of December—Major-General Negata's splendid placing of six batteries of field guns, and the work they did in the final assault—The partial armistice for the purpose of gathering the dead in front of the eastern ridge.

THE spirit in which the army approached the task of capturing 203 Metre Hill and its supplementary position upon a low knoll to the north-east, called Akasakayama, was one closely akin to desperation. Another failure would mean censure in Japan, and all the consequences incident to failure. The fact that a serious crisis in the progress of the siege had been reached was indicated by the arrival at Army Headquarters of Major-General Fukushima, Chief of Staff to General Marquis Oyama, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Armies in Northern Manchuria, and Major-General Baron Kodama, the assistant to the Chief of Staff. It was evident that they came in an advisory capacity to General Nogi, from the fact that they both proceeded immediately to the headquarters of the first division in front of 203 Metre Hill, and remained there personally directing the assaults until the end.

The 203 Metre Hill position was one of the strongest in the enemy's line of defence west of

the city, and took its name from its height in metres. Its natural strength lay largely in the conformation of the immediately adjacent ground. Though surrounded on three sides by hills, it was in a large measure isolated. Extending around the north and west fronts there was a deep narrow valley which had to be gained by an advance down the gentle slopes of surrounding hills. Upon the east front, until the time it was captured by the Japanese in September, Namaokyama ridge constituted a strong supporting position. Afterwards the defensive strength of the hill was very little impaired, for the Russians fortified a small low hill upon the north-east front called Akasakayama. From this knoll the approaches to the entire north front of 203 Metre Hill, as well as its slopes, could be literally swept with rifle and machine-gun fire. Any attempt on the part of the troops of the besieging army to approach the south front left them open to a direct artillery fire over comparatively low level ground from the Itzeshan and Taiyangkow forts, and to a rifle fire at close quarters from trenches upon a low ridge of hills which extended in a south-westerly direction from 203 Metre Hill to the shores of Pigeon Bay. The enemy's defensive works were cleverly devised, and made the position practically impregnable against infantry assaults. It is certain the Japanese would not have been able to capture the hills without enormously greater losses than they did sustain, had it not been for the exceedingly good work done by a battery of 11-inch howitzers well placed about a mile to the north. It was only when the fire from these guns smashed the Russian defensive works and

rendered them untenable that any substantial progress towards capture was made by the assaulting infantry. The hill was crowned with double peaks, between which there was a low depression or neck. From east to west at the base the north slopes presented a front of about five hundred yards. The climb to the crests was a hard one, and there was very little cover at any point. The west front was narrow and considerably steeper than the north. Upon the north-east a low neck connected the hill with Akasaka-yama, which stood well out in front, so that from it an enfilading fire could be directed against any advance of infantry up the north slopes of the larger hill. Two lines of deep, well-made trenches, protected by sand-bags and with head-cover at intervals, belted 203 Metre eminence, the lower about one-third and the upper about two-thirds of the way up the slopes. Both these trench-lines terminated upon the rear face of the hill, which had been converted into a most ingenious series of splendidly-built bomb-proofs capable of giving shelter to about fifteen hundred troops. The hill-slope between the two ends of the trench-lines had been terraced, and upon the terraces the bomb-proof shelters for the reserves of the garrison had been erected, so that they presented a minimum of surface to the effects of shell fire. From these shelters the two lines of defence upon the north and west fronts could be reinforced at any time without the reserves coming under fire. Upon the double peaks were strong permanent field works, built of heavy timbers, strengthened with steel rails, roofed in with steel plates, and covered over upon the outside with sand-bags and

earth, eight or ten feet in thickness. From the upper tier of shelters upon the rear slopes of the hill, a tunnel had been pierced under the neck between the two peaks, so that troops could go from rear to front without climbing over the neck or working around through the belting trench-lines. Through this tunnel the centre of the second line of defence upon the north slopes could be reinforced quickly, without the troops coming under fire at all. Running at right angles to this traverse tunnel from its centre under the neck, there were other longitudinal tunnels to the permanent works upon the two peaks, which mounted only automatic quick-firing and machine guns. At one time the Russians had a battery of heavy artillery upon the reverse slopes just under the neck, but it had to be removed when the Japanese shell fire became heavy. The defences of the Akasakayama knoll, though not so elaborate, were arranged in practically the same manner. A line of trenches circled the knoll a short distance from its base, while upon its crest there was a permanent field work similar to those upon the peaks of the larger hill. In all cases there were double rows of wire entanglements in front of the trench-lines upon both sections of the position. When the Namaokyama ridge was captured in September the Japanese tried for two or three days to gain possession of 203 Metre Hill by attacking up the west slopes. They succeeded in piercing both lines of defence, and a small party entered the permanent work upon the west peak, but they were overpowered and practically annihilated. At the cost of some two or three thousand casualties the Army Staff then discovered something

about the position, though its real strength was only developed in the final series of assaults. Independent authorities upon military matters, who examined the defences after the place had fallen, expressed the opinion freely, that but for the very heavy artillery used—guns much heavier than had ever been used in siege operations before—the position was practically impregnable against infantry assaults.

For over two months the troops of the besieging army had worked day and night constructing three lines of sapping trenches up to the base of 203 Metre Hill from the north-east, the north-west, and the centre. A line was also run up close to the base of the Akasakayama knoll. The difficulties encountered had been enormous, for every trench-line was open to a concentrated and converging fire from both 203 Metre Hill and Akasakayama, as well as to a furious bombardment from the fortress artillery upon the Itzeshan and Taiyangkow forts, and smaller guns mounted upon positions directly in rear of 203 Metre Hill. The fact that the trenches had to be run down the slopes to the deep valley at the bases of both hills greatly increased the amount of labour, as the saps had to be much deeper than would otherwise have been necessary to afford protection from rifle and machine-gun fire from the 203 Metre heights. Nor did the enemy tamely submit to progress being made with the work. Almost every night there were sorties against the sap heads, and on more than one occasion the work of weeks was destroyed by these night attacks. When the lines of sapping trenches had reached a point about fifty yards from the wire entanglements in front

of the first, or lower, line of the enemy's defence, the sap heads were connected by a long parallel trench, extending for fully three-quarters of the length of the hill at its base. From this long parallel two short lines of zig-zag saps, with short attacking parallels at their heads, were run through the first line of entanglements, one at the east and the other at the west extremity of the north slopes, to a point not more than fifty yards from the first Russian trench-line, about one-third of the way up the hill. In front of Akasakayama the attacking parallel was about one hundred and fifty yards from the first trench-line of the enemy near the foot of the knoll. These were the preparations that had been made for the attack which commenced on the evening of the 27th of November, just twelve hours after the utter failure of the general assault upon the western half of the enemy's line of defence east of the city.

The attack commenced about six o'clock in the evening. Two columns, composed of two battalions each, advanced from the attacking parallels upon the north-east and upon the north-west slopes of 203 Metre Hill, under cover of a heavy bombardment from the divisional artillery and a battery of 11-inch howitzers. The lower line of Russian trenches which belted the hill was carried at both points with a rush, and strongly held. During the night the columns had worked up the slopes towards the upper line of trenches. In the morning they had not only established themselves in shelter trenches, but had also succeeded in making breaches in the wire entanglements in front of the enemy's line. The losses of the assaulting parties up to this time had been

heavy, though the fact that the fighting in and about the lower trenches had taken place during the night and at close quarters made it difficult for the enemy in the upper line to take much part. The following morning a general assault was ordered. About half-past eight o'clock the columns upon the slopes of 203 Metre Hill advanced towards the upper trench-line immediately below the peaks, while a third column, three companies strong, fiercely assailed the Russian trenches upon the Akasakayama knoll. It was an assault in force. The Japanese saps were crowded with reserves, parties of which were sent up from time to time to reinforce the assaulting columns. The bombardment which accompanied the attack was, as usual, tremendous. Heavy shells from the big howitzers landed in dozens upon the crests, while the enemy's trench-line was almost obscured from view by the white smoke from bursting shrapnel. In the first charge men went down in scores under the fire from Russian rifles. Four different assaults were made inside two hours, the number of the assaulters being increased each time by new troops from the reserves at the foot of the hill. The enemy's artillery played havoc with the column attacking the north-west trench-line. The Japanese field guns, just before the last assault, turned on an increased volume of shrapnel, and the enemy's line was almost completely hidden in smoke. Almost simultaneously both extremities of the trench-line were pierced and held, while the main bodies pressed onward and upward towards the defensive works upon the two peaks, under a terrible rifle and machine-gun fire. Both columns broke under this punishment, and fled down to the valley in

compact bodies, pursued by Russian shrapnel. They rallied, however, in front of the trenches where the reserves were, and returned to their former position above the enemy's upper line. All this time a furious attack was being made upon the Akasakayama knoll. The assaulters twice attempted to rush the position, but were repulsed each time with heavy losses. They succeeded, however, in constructing a semi-circular sand-bag wall or enclosure within fifty yards or so of the Russian trench-line. The enemy upon 203 Metre Hill were strongly reinforced about seven o'clock in the evening, and poured through the tunnel from the rear of the hill into the upper trench-line. A vigorous counter-attack immediately followed, and the Japanese were driven off the slopes of the hill entirely, and compelled to seek the shelter of their sapping trenches in the valley below. This was the first occasion when dynamite grenades were extensively used during the series of attacks. For close-range work in the trenches, and against the troops retiring down the steep slopes, they were murderously effective. From this time on, dynamite was used far more largely at close quarters than either rifles or bayonets.

Up to this time the attacks had been carried on by the troops of the first division and its brigade of second reserves, but early upon the morning of the 29th the whole of the seventh division of infantry, some thirty-five thousand men, was brought up, and a number of regiments at once placed in the advanced trenches. This division had only arrived from Japan about ten days before. They had marched from Dalny to the little village of Swang-tai-kow, and there encamped, fully ten

miles in rear of the lines, to wait until their services were required. The men of this division were conscripted principally from the Hokkaido district in Japan. They were stout, sturdy soldiers, but absolutely new at the game of war. Never before had any of them been under fire, for their division had not previously been mobilized for active service. During the same night and the early morning of the 30th the Japanese again occupied small sections of the upper trench-line upon 203 Metre Hill and also those upon Akasakayama, but they were unable to hold them. All night long the fighting lasted, most of it at close quarters, principally with dynamite grenades. The losses upon both sides were exceedingly heavy, though the assaulters, of course, paid much the heaviest price. A little before noon on the 30th a party of about fifty of the enemy advanced with great courage from the trenches upon Akasakayama and endeavoured to evict a small body of Japanese who were holding the sand-bag enclosure in front of the knoll. By a splendid rush they managed to gain the inside of the work, where a hand-to-hand conflict took place with bayonets. The Russian force was practically annihilated, only some half-dozen making good their escape. After this experience the enclosure was more strongly held. During the morning the troops of the seventh division had been pouring into the front lines. Shortly after two o'clock in the afternoon three battalions had massed in the long parallel in the valley at the foot of the hill under the west peak. The attack was commenced at half-past two o'clock by two battalions—the third remaining in reserve—advancing towards the evacuated

lower Russian trench-line. There was considerable delay at the first line of wire entanglements, which had not been cut, probably owing to the fact that all previous attacks had been made from the shorter parallels, which were well above this line of wire. Eventually the column formed up under cover at the foot of the hill in four lines of half battalions, the distance between the lines being about seven yards. It seemed impossible that it could be the intention to advance up the hill in this close formation, but the black mass of men almost immediately moved on towards the upper line of trenches. They had not gone far before they were smitten with a murderous rifle fire from the upper line of the enemy's trenches and Akasakayama. It was a ghastly sight, for men went down in dozens. With their naked swords flashing in the sunlight, the officers gave the words of command and the column halted, faced half left, and, still keeping ranks, poured volley after volley into the hillside. They could not have hit anything even if they had tried, for the enemy was above them at an almost impossible angle for men firing standing from ranks. After a few minutes the advance was continued in the same formation under a terribly effective rifle fire, until the column reached a dead angle just under the enemy's upper trench-line, where there was partial cover. Here a battalion and a half remained, while the leading half battalion pushed on up the slopes through the trench-line towards the defensive work upon the crest of the west peak, still in the same formation. The Russians in the work allowed this black mass of men to approach well within the distance from which

they could be reached by dynamite hand-grenades. In a moment more the grenades were landing among the assaulters and exploding with terrible results. It only lasted about ten minutes, but the Russians worked hard, and scores were thrown. In their close formation half a dozen men were killed by the explosion of a single grenade. Still the officers urged the men forward, and it looked as if it was bound to be a case of total annihilation. Finally the men broke and went down the hill in a mad headlong flight, carrying with them in a panic practically the whole column. The flight lasted until the men reached the trenches in the valley, in which the reserves were formed up with fixed bayonets waiting for orders to advance. Then the downward rush stopped, except for some half-dozen whom nothing short of a bullet could have stopped. What followed during the next few minutes was pathetic. The sight of their own reserves calmly waiting for an opportunity to go up the hill they had just so ignominiously descended seemed to awaken the soldiers to a sense of their own unworthy conduct. Many turned in their tracks and started back up the slopes, others walked aimlessly around as if dazed, while the great majority stood like sheep waiting to be told what to do, all the time under a heavy rifle fire. There was no doubt about the soundness of the material, even if the training and knowledge of the officers was bad. None of these men had ever encountered dynamite in this form before. They had taken more punishment from rifle and shell fire than any troops should ever have been called upon to take without wavering; but when it came to dynamite, which blotted out

half-dozens at an explosion, their courage failed them. Once the men were stopped in their flight, it only took a few minutes for the officers to rally them, and again they went up the hill in the same stupid formation, though there were not nearly so many of them as had started the first time. With heavy losses the column made its way to the same cover under the upper trench-line, which had evidently been at least partially evacuated by the enemy. Here they remained, while a feeble demonstration was made against the east peak from the advance parallel, which accomplished nothing. This was the situation at nightfall. During the afternoon General Nogi's second son, who had been a lieutenant doing staff duty with the headquarters of the first division, was killed while carrying a message to the front lines. His eldest son had been killed at the battle of Nanshan, and the death of his second son left him childless, and without an heir to his title and estates.

During the night of November 30th the Japanese again occupied the enemy's trench-lines upon Akasakayama, after a desperate assault in which hand-grenades were very largely used at close quarters. The knoll was a hard position to hold, however, for the captors were driven out just before dawn after an hour's fighting. Early upon the following morning the sappers had completed a trench-line up the north-west slopes of 203 Metre Hill, from the parallels at the foot to within a short distance of the crest of the west peak. By this time the big howitzer shells had pounded the enemy's defensive works upon both peaks completely to pieces, so that their ruins could

only be permanently occupied by the enemy at enormous cost in life. The upper trench-line had also been so badly smashed that it could only be occupied temporarily during attacks, and then at a great cost in life. The entrance to the tunnel connecting the front with the reverse slopes had been filled up to such an extent, as a result of the explosion of heavy shells, that it could not be used at all. Instead, the Russians had excavated a short trench-line over the neck which gave them access to the centre section of the upper trench-line at times when an attack was imminent. At other times the trench-line was not occupied except by a few scouts. The longitudinal tunnels connecting the crests of the two peaks with the traverse tunnel under the neck were still intact, but the exit to the one leading to the west peak was blocked up, and commanded by the Japanese from the trench-line which had been run up to the crest of that peak. Though the whole crest of the hill was now practically neutral ground, the Russians could still gain the east peak through the system of underground passages, and the centre section of the upper trench-line through the trench they had built, from the system of bomb-proofs upon the reverse slopes over the neck between the two peaks. The garrison for the most part, however, kept under cover of their bomb-proofs, except when a Japanese attack was imminent, and then small firing parties were sent to occupy the positions upon the crest of the east peak and the north front of the hill. The trench-line up the north-west slopes had been subjected to a very strong opposition from the enemy in the earlier stages of its construction, but during the night of

November 30th a heavy bombardment of the reverse slopes of the hill kept the enemy so busy that the sappers by an almost superhuman effort succeeded in running their trench up close to the ruins of the Russian work upon the crest, so that rifle and machine-gun fire from a strong breast-work of sand-bags across the end of the trench commanded the whole of the crest of the west peak. This trench-line was manned by a force of some four or five hundred soldiers along its whole length, to prevent successful attempts at capture being made by sortie parties. There was very little movement of infantry upon the 1st of December, but the howitzer batteries kept up a continuous plunging fire against the Russian bomb-proofs upon the reverse slopes of the hill. Early on the morning of the 2nd the enemy massed in the neck between the two peaks, for an assault against the new head of the trench-line up the north-west slopes. The artillery was at once signalled to, and opened a bombardment which was tremendously effective. About eight o'clock the attack was made, but was repulsed with heavy slaughter. Two hours later the Russians retired from the neck, and it looked as if they intended to retire from the hill altogether. From the heights about Shuishi village they could be seen lowering their wounded down the reverse slopes by means of ropes. All the following day the fighting was continuous, but no assaulting parties were sent up either hill. The sappers were busily engaged constructing a new system of saps and attacking parallels to accommodate more troops for an assault upon the east peak of the hill. The Japanese succeeded in establishing an observation post upon the crest

of the west peak, from which they were able to observe what was going on upon the reverse slopes, and direct the artillery fire by telephone. All day the big howitzers pounded the south slopes with their five-hundred-pound shells, smashing the enemy's bomb-proofs at almost every shot; while the smaller howitzer batteries also kept up a continuous bombardment. With their usual determination the Russian garrison still held on, though their case was now well-nigh hopeless. During the afternoon it was announced at Army Headquarters that the two hills would be taken the following day, no matter what the cost in life might be. No pains were spared in making every possible arrangement that would be likely to contribute to the success of this final assault. During the night the new attacking parallel upon the north-east slopes was finished. In order to make it impossible for the enemy to send reinforcements to the garrison after the assault commenced upon the morrow, the independent artillery brigade, comprising six batteries of six guns each, was placed upon a low ridge to the west and a little to the south of the hill, so that an indirect fire could be brought to bear upon troops advancing towards the reverse slopes from the south. Ranges had been carefully ascertained, and telephonic communication established with the observation post upon the crest of the west peak, so that information as to the exact location of reinforcements could be had without delay. The situation at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 5th was that the Japanese were in possession of the west peak; the enemy had a small force in the centre section of the upper trench-line, and another in

the ruins of the defensive work upon the crest of the east peak. The Japanese batteries were playing upon the crest of the east peak and the neck between the two, while the big howitzers were dropping shells upon the reverse slopes of the hill. At Akasakayama the Russians still held the trench-line and the works upon the crest of the knoll, and the Japanese attacking parallel was about fifty yards distant from the trench-line.

The approaches to the new attacking parallel upon the north-east slopes of the hill began to fill with troops a little after noon. It was noticeable that the men fixed bayonets in the approaching trenches. About half-past one a company trickled out of the attacking parallel in twos and threes and re-formed under cover close to the upper trench-line. In a few minutes this company advanced in extended order, and worked its way towards the east peak apparently with little or no loss. The small force of the enemy which had occupied the centre section of the upper trench-line seemed to have retired in consequence of the awful shell fire which was poured into it from the Japanese artillery. Supports were then trickled up in companies and re-formed as the first had done, in the same place. Then an advance was made to the summit of the peak under a fairly heavy fire. The whole crest-line of the hill, including the two peaks, was occupied by a battalion about half-past two o'clock, and the successful assaulters could be seen throwing grenades at the enemy upon the reverse slopes. During the attack the Russians three times endeavoured to bring reinforcements up to the south slopes of the hill,

but the wisdom of Major-General Negata's placing of his brigade of field guns upon the ridge to the south-west then became evident. All the time the attack was on, the approaches to and the reverse slopes of the hill were swept by the fire of these thirty-six guns, eighteen of which were using shrapnel and the remainder common shell. After the position had been taken, the long lines of bodies which littered the approaches, and the number of dead upon the reverse slopes, showed the enormously important part the artillery brigade had played in the capture of the position. The practice of the batteries was marvellous, considering the fact that one-half the total number of guns were using indirect fire against the approaches, under directions by telephone from the observation post as to the exact location of the bodies of reinforcements. Meantime the struggle for possession of Akasakayama knoll was not nearly so easy. Twice the assaulters were driven back with considerable loss; but the third attempt was successful, owing principally to the enormous number of grenades used, after the capture of the trench-line, in the attack upon the crest. The garrison fought with splendid courage and the top of the position was covered with the slain. The firing had practically ceased by half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, and the entire position was in possession of the besieging army after a most desperate and continuous series of assaults lasting eight days. The Japanese losses were between ten and twelve thousand killed and wounded, while the enemy lost some four or five thousand killed and wounded. The casualties in the last successful assault were approximately seven hundred

Japanese and from eleven to twelve hundred Russian, principally from the effects of shell fire.

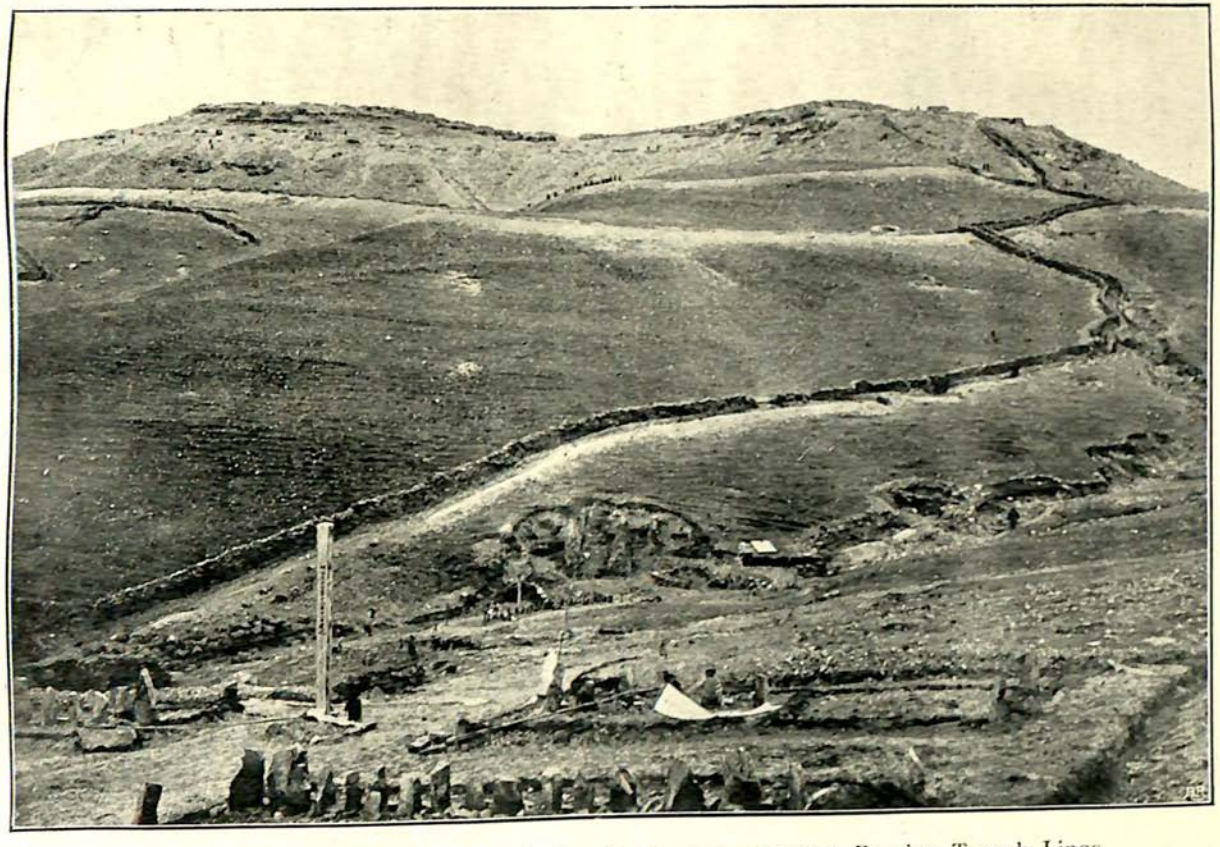
While this struggle was going on at 203 Metre Hill, the Hospital Corps were busily engaged gathering the dead and wounded upon the western half of the eastern ridge. During the progress of this work the first armistice during the siege was agreed upon, in order that the bodies of the dead might be collected. It was a partial armistice, and applied only to one particular restricted zone. The manner in which the request was made and granted is interesting, because of developments later. A Japanese medical officer with a few stretcher-bearers carrying a Red Cross flag approached the Russian trench-line upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill. The Russian officer in command at once clambered over his trench-wall, and the two officers met. Speaking in Japanese, the Russian said he supposed the object of the visit was to make a request to collect the dead. The Japanese at once replied that such was his desire. The enemy's Chief of Staff was telephoned to, and in a few minutes the request was granted. About the same time another medical officer with a party of stretcher-bearers approached the North Keekwan fort in the open, and was stopped in the same manner, and a similar request made and granted. The zone between the two points was marked with white flags, and hostilities suspended for six hours in order to collect the dead upon the slopes of the East Keekwan Hill, the slopes of the gorge and the Kobu position, as well as the North Keekwan fort. The official figures given out by the medical officers

the following day were to the effect that from the 26th of November until the 2nd of December nine thousand men and two hundred and six officers had been passed through the hospitals.

CHAPTER XXIII

The beginning of the end of the siege—What the capture of 203 Metre Hill meant—The abandonment by the Russians of the strong line of protected trenches between the Chair Hills and the captured hill—The Russian request for an armistice in order to gather their killed and wounded—What was to be seen upon the shell-torn slopes and battered crests of the hill—The fearful effect of dynamite grenades and high-explosive shells—The escape of the torpedo destroyer *Rotstoropny*—The destruction of the warships in the harbour—The sinking of the *Saiyen*.

THE capture of the 203 Metre Hill position marked the beginning of the end of the siege. The first result which followed was the utter annihilation of the remnants of the Russian Navy in the harbour. From the observation post upon its crest the fire of the 11-inch howitzers and heavy naval guns was directed to any and every part of the city and the harbour. But other and equally important results followed the capture of the position. Though it was nothing more than a strong field work, 203 Metre Hill was in reality the key to the enemy's position west of the city. Before it fell into the hands of the besieging army no attempt was made, or could have been successfully made, against the line of defences upon the west flank. After, the enemy without a struggle abandoned the northern enceinte to the western position, a long line of protected trenches which extended from the northern extremity of the Chair Hill heights in a westerly direction to the captured hill. The Japanese had early in August



Two hundred and three Metre Hill after its Capture, showing Russian Trench Lines and Japanese Sapping Trenches.

outflanked the 203 Metre Hill position by pushing a force as far south as the northern shores of Pigeon Bay, but in so doing they had gained no particular advantage, for two reasons. In the first place, the enemy had a strong line of defence extending from the shores of Pigeon Bay in a north-easterly direction to the captured hill. It was only a line of infantry trenches which ran along the crests of a low ridge, and could have been broken by the troops of the besieging army; but it would have served no good purpose to have moved in that way, for between this line and the western forts the country was more or less an open plain which could be literally swept with artillery fire from three sides against any advance. With 203 Metre Hill in the possession of the besieging army the entire situation was changed. The line of defence from the shores of Pigeon Bay to the captured hill was no longer tenable, because it was commanded by artillery fire directed from those heights. It was, after the capture, also possible to advance over the plain beyond, for the same reason. The western forts no longer absolutely commanded the approaches to the inner line of defence about the city upon the west. The essential sections of the enemy's lines of defence about Port Arthur, for a besieging army to have assailed, were obviously the weaker sections, which would enable the besiegers by capturing and holding them to command the centre, which of course was the city, and segregate the uncaptured forts into isolated groups, so that if necessary they could be dealt with in detail. This is exactly what the Japanese plan contemplated. By the capture of the comparatively weak western section

of the eastern line of defence, from the East Keekwan Hill to the West Urhlung fort, the centre was commanded, and the powerful group of forts upon the eastern section of the line of defence east of the city completely segregated. By the capture of 203 Metre Hill the way was opened to an advance against the city from the west. That advance could be made to involve the cutting of all communication between the Tiger's Tail and Laotieh-shan groups of forts and the Chair Hill group, and between both and the city. Though their task was made an easy one by the feebleness of the defence later on, that was precisely what the Japanese did after the capture of 203 Metre Hill. The effect of the plan was never tested because the position surrendered, but it would have been very interesting to have seen the capabilities these powerful and untouched groups of forts possessed for defence in a fight to the finish.

It was because the possession of 203 Metre Hill meant all this to the resisting strength of the entire fortress position that so much care and labour was expended by the enemy upon its defences, and such tremendous and well-sustained efforts made to prevent its capture by the troops of the besieging army. It is possible that the 203 Metre Hill position might have been bought at a cheaper price in life had more time been spent in making better and more extensive approaches; but in addition to the very strong reasons the army had for striking at once after the failure of the general assault of the 26th of November, the nearer approach of the Russian Baltic fleet made the Navy extremely anxious to finally dispose of the moribund remainder of the fleet in the harbour

at Port Arthur, so that it might be relieved of the task of blockading the harbour, in good time to have the warships overhauled and repaired before it became necessary to take on further offensive operations against the Baltic fleet. This was a very sound reason, for the warships of the Japanese Navy had been almost a year in Port Arthur waters at that time, and there were very few of them that did not require a thorough and complete overhauling. It was well known, of course, that with an observation post upon the crest of 203 Metre Hill, the fire of the big howitzers and the heavy naval guns could be made to search every section of the harbour and utterly demolish the enemy's warships, unless they attempted to escape, in which case the fleet was in readiness to deal with them outside the harbour.

Immediately after the capture of 203 Metre Hill the enemy evacuated a long line of well-constructed trenches, extending from the Chair Hill heights to the captured hill. This trench-line served the same purpose in front of the western half of the position as the old Chinese Wall did in front of the eastern half, it was the outer line of defence. The remainder of this outer line, from 203 Metre Hill to the shores of Pigeon Bay, was not immediately evacuated, but it was captured without much opposition during the weeks that followed.

The day after the final attack upon 203 Metre Hill, Russian messengers approached the Japanese lines, and submitted a written request from General Stoessel asking for an armistice in order that the dead and wounded might be collected. The request was written in French, and its diction was

not absolutely correct. It simply asked for an armistice for the purpose of collecting the dead. The messenger was informed that the request would be submitted to General Nogi, and an answer returned the following day. The messengers met as arranged, and a favourable answer in writing was handed to the Russian, addressed to General Stoessel. After showing his authority for so doing, the Russian messenger opened the letter, and then informed the Japanese officer who had brought it that he had been instructed by General Stoessel to withdraw the request, owing to the delay which had taken place. The wounded would either have died from exposure, or have been taken care of by the Japanese authorities. It was pointed out that the request made by General Stoessel applied only to the collection of the dead. Had it been known that it was intended to apply to wounded as well, the delay would not have taken place. There had been a mistake, of course, but this little incident caused some resentment on the part of the enemy, who expressed surprise that a similar request made by the Japanese only a few days before, having been granted on the spot, there should have been a delay of twenty-four hours before a definite answer could be had to their request. Possibly the real reason for the delay was that the Japanese were not particularly anxious that the enemy should get to know anything about the disposition of their troops and guns in rear of the captured hill.

It was a couple of days after the position had been captured that we secured permission to visit the slopes and crests of 203 Metre Hill and Akasaka-yama. The wounded had all been moved to

the hospitals, and the sanitary corps was busily engaged removing the ghastly evidences of the struggle. This work was a long way from completion, however, and what still remained to be seen was horrible beyond description. From the crests of the slope, leading down into the narrow valley at the foot of the hill from which the assaults had usually been made, we were compelled to follow the trench-lines, because of the Russian shells that came over the hill at intervals. These trenches were torn, and in places partly filled in with earth from the bursting of the enemy's shells, and the ground round about was strewn thickly with empty cases and fragments. When we reached the bottom of the valley where the long parallel trench, in which the assaulting troops had massed for attack, was, we saw the first evidence of the great mortality during the long and continued fighting. The sanitary corps had gathered most of the dead about the parallel trench-line and the foot of the hill. In piles they were stacked up, hundreds of them. These were men who, for the most part, had been shot either in the parallels or about the foot of the hill, and at least they had been decently killed. Still, the valley was not a pleasant sight. It was littered for its whole length in front of the hill with broken rifles, soldiers' kits, articles of clothing, and all the other paraphernalia usually seen upon a battlefield. Up the slopes we made our ways, not through the trenches, for they had been completely torn to pieces by the effect of shell fire. The first Russian trench-line near the base had been splendidly built, but it had been converted into a total wreck by shell fire and dynamite grenades. The sand-bags with which

the defence wall was crested were torn to shreds and littered the bottom of the trench, while all along the whole line there were scores of dead, Russian and Japanese, in all conceivable positions just as they had fallen. Some lay in the trench under the broken sand-bags, more were stretched across the wall, evidently hit the moment they emerged from cover. Here and there one came across others which were scarcely recognizable as human bodies because of the awful manner in which they had been mutilated by dynamite. This, however, was only the beginning of what was to be seen upon that hill of horrors. We came to the dead angle below the upper Russian trench-line where the attacking troops had usually re-formed for assault. There were dead men in scores, nearly all Japanese, but most of them had been killed by rifle fire, principally from Akasaka-yama; for the dead angle did not afford cover from that enfilading fire. Only occasionally was there to be seen the effects of high-explosive shells which had landed in the midst of re-forming lines of infantry, when half a dozen men had been shattered out of all recognition. What we had already seen in the climb up the slopes had in a measure prepared us for worse nearer the crest, but not for the unspeakable horror of the sight which we came upon as we reached the upper Russian trench-line. Even if he could find language strong enough, no sane man would dare even attempt to paint the picture in all its sickening details. It was no ordinary shambles, where one found soldiers decently killed either by rifle fire or the bayonet, though that is hard enough to look upon. This had been a zone of fire in which hundreds of

soldiers had been simply blotted out of existence by dynamite and high-explosive shells. The ground was literally strewn with odds and ends of humanity, although the deep, wide trench-line was filled to overflowing with what had once been human bodies. No one could look upon the sight without shuddering with horror. A trench-line, fully five hundred yards, extending along the entire face of the hill, filled with a tangled mass of arms and legs, and trunks that had no limbs at all, seared black with the fire, and stripped naked by the force of the explosion of dynamite grenades! Fragments of men were being gathered from all parts of the hill in bagging, and piled in huge pyres. Near the crest of the east peak I came across a long row of about a hundred Japanese dead. Most of the bodies were naked and burned black, their limbs rigid, and upon their faces a look of frozen terror, the expression caught just as they had met death from that terribly revived missile of former warfare, the dynamite hand-grenade. And yet one hears that this modern dynamite grenade, which was used so largely at Port Arthur, is merely a reversal to ancient custom. At no time in the history of warfare, civilized or savage, has such a hellish implement been used to slaughter men. The effect of high-explosive shells upon troops in attack is bad enough, but it is not for a second to be compared with the diabolical results which come from the extensive use of these dynamite hand-grenades in the hands of opposing forces of soldiers. Their use is utterly inhuman, and compels the soldier to meet death in a manner no soldier ought to be compelled to meet his end. But worse still, ten thousand times worse, are those who do not

wholly die, but are taken to the hospitals torn limb from limb, to reach the end finally in unspeakable agony, or perchance to live, a travesty upon the human form, disfigured for life. On the way up the slopes, upon the crests, and all about the upper part of the hill this frightful unnatural shambles extended. There was scarcely a foot of the surface of the slopes at this point which was not torn with shell fire. Dozens of big howitzer shells had exploded in the mouth of the traverse tunnel under the neck of the hill where it gave access to the upper line of trenches, and the force of the explosions had completely obliterated and filled up the entrance. It had been wonderful practice that had pounded this tunnel entrance into a mass of disintegrated earth and broken timbers, but no less marvellous was the effect of shell fire upon the trench-lines and the defensive works upon either peak. There was not a particle of head-cover left anywhere upon the hill. Steel plates had been torn into shapeless twisted remnants. Heavy timbers had been smashed into thousands of splinters. Every yard of defensive work was open to the heavens, and the trench-lines were so filled with earth that a soldier could scarcely find cover in any part crawling upon his stomach. The peaks of the hill had been pounded out of their original shape, and tons of earth thus displaced had been debouched down the steep hill-slopes. Small wonder the position had been captured, now that the reason was made plain. The marvel was that any troops in the world would have defended it as long as this Russian garrison did, fighting from open trenches and wrecked defences under the same awful shell fire which had created

the destruction visible all about. And yet the commander of the garrison had been taken prisoner after a fierce hand-to-hand fight, in the ruins of the defensive work upon the east peak, in the last successful assault. Charges have been made, and many of them are true, that there were many incompetents and more malingerers among the officers of the Port Arthur garrison; but there were splendid soldiers among them as well, for whom the Russian rank and file fought, as they certainly did fight for this commander. And in this connection it is only fair to state that never was prisoner of war better treated than this Russian captain, taken sword in hand fighting his last fight with successful assaulters. The Japanese soldier has all the veneration and respect for personal courage that any Western troops could possibly have. The commander of 203 Metre Hill garrison, and a naval officer who was with him, were entertained at Army Headquarters by General Nogi and his staff, offered parole, which they refused, and finally went to Japan prisoners of war wearing their swords. Upon my return from Port Arthur, I had the good fortune to meet this commander on the train between Hiroshima and Nagoya. He was a quiet, thoughtful-looking man, who was very interested when he found that I had just returned from Port Arthur. During the conversation I accidentally discovered his identity, and involuntarily expressed admiration strongly, to his very evident discomfort. He had only done his duty, and he was afraid he had succeeded in doing that very badly, but it was hard defending the hill towards the end, for there was no cover left, and it was only useless slaughter to keep soldiers in the

defending trenches upon the crest because of the exceedingly heavy shell fire. The Japanese were wonderful soldiers, he had to admit, but his own were every bit as good. The end of the defence had come when efforts to bring up reinforcements to assist the garrison to repel the last assault had been defeated by an awful shell fire from some unknown quarter to the westward. The placing of the brigade of artillery I explained to him, and he was frank in his amazement and admiration. The fire of these guns against the rear of the hill had been very destructive, he admitted, and had brought the end much quicker than it would otherwise have come. He marvelled at the accuracy of the fire, especially that against the reinforcements, for they were supposed to have been under cover when the enemy's batteries opened upon them with indirect fire. The Japanese had been clever, he said, in choosing the exact psychological moment in which to open with these guns, at the time they could do most damage, and ensure the success of their assault. It had been a pleasure to talk with the man, he was such a keen soldier, and so plainly heartbroken over the none too creditable end of the siege and the disasters to the Russian cause in the North. The trouble with the Port Arthur garrison I gathered, though he did not tell me, was that men of this man's stamp and the stamp of General Kondrachenko were killed too early in the game, and left others to take their places who ran too little danger of being killed.

The scene upon the Akasakayama knoll was practically a repetition of what had been seen upon the larger hill. There were the same terrible

shambles, and the same broken trenches and defensive works. Upon both hills the assaulting infantry had paid very heavily in life for a victory which had only been attained in the end through the most amazing artillery support it is possible to imagine. The work done by the 11-inch howitzers was, of course, the great feature, for their heavy shells always wrought great destruction. All the time the series of attacks were going on, and afterwards when the ships of the Russian Navy were being destroyed, the enemy's fortress artillery tried to locate these guns and put them out of action, but they did not even succeed in damaging one of them. This was entirely due to the remarkably clever manner in which they had been placed. The one direction from which the enemy could not send shells at the battery was the west, because they had no guns of sufficient range upon the western coast-line, and could only place them there with enormous difficulty and much delay. A position was therefore selected a short distance east, and about a mile and a half to the north of 203 Metre Hill, which it was the purpose to bombard. A low ridge was chosen which, from the enemy's position, was backed by a much higher one. At the base of the lower ridge upon its west side the escarpment of the hill was cut away, so that the four big guns could be mounted one behind the other in emplacements thus made for them. The slopes of the higher ridge across a narow valley from the guns were simply honeycombed with shell holes. The low ridge, against the west slopes of which the emplacements were, was also heavily marked, and the small valley between was covered with great

holes. Shells had been landed immediately west of the emplacements, and exactly where the guns would have been had the side of the hill not been excavated to receive them. The Russian gunners had tried hard and for a long time, but their efforts had been entirely fruitless.

The destruction of the enemy's ships in the harbour was commenced as soon as the last attack upon 203 Metre Hill position was over. Though the big howitzers were also used, the principal work of sinking the enemy's warships was carried out by the naval guns. Five of these 4.7-inch guns were mounted upon the low neck between 203 Metre Hill and the Akasakayama knoll. From the manner in which they were placed these guns were able to use direct fire with armour-piercing shells and heavy driving charges. Strange to say, the Russians almost completely neglected to fire at this battery, though day after day they were used to sink ship after ship. Up to this time such an opportunity would never have been neglected by the garrison. It was one of the signs which indicated that the defenders had been rendered a little hopeless by the loss of the 203 Metre Hill position, and by the knowledge that three of the guarding forts upon the foothills of the western half of the eastern line of defence were being mined and might at any moment be destroyed. The battleship *Poltava* was the first to be sunk upon the 6th, and the battleship *Retvezan* was the second victim. Then the cruisers *Bayan* and *Pallada* quietly settled down, and could be seen resting upon the bottom. Upon the 8th the battleship *Peresviet* was also sunk, and during the same afternoon the gunboat *Gilyak*

met a similar fate. Some time during the night of the 9th the battleship *Sevastopol* succeeded in making her way out of the harbour, and anchored under the shelter of the Lao-tieh-shan land batteries. Her crew at once set to work to surround her with a heavy wooden boom equipped with torpedo nets, to protect the ship from attempts by the torpedo craft of the Japanese Navy to sink her. By the night of the 9th there was nothing afloat in the harbour. The entire fleet had been destroyed except the battleship *Sevastopol*, some eight or nine torpedo craft, and two or three small transports, which being small and easily handled sought the shelter of the harbour during the night to escape torpedo attacks, and remained outside all day to escape the fire from the land batteries. The warships having been all destroyed, a heavy fire was directed against the various workshops and ammunition factories about the docks in the east harbour, with the result that most of them were completely destroyed.

During this period nothing of great moment had happened so far as the Navy was concerned in front of the harbour. The blockade was kept up, but despite all vigilance the torpedo destroyer *Rotstoropny* succeeded in escaping on the night of the 15th of November during a severe snowstorm, made her way safely to Chefoo, where she was blown up and sunk in the harbour by her crew. On the 30th of November the gunboat *Saiyen*, while doing blockade duties off the shores near Pigeon Bay, struck one of the enemy's mines, and sank immediately with her captain and thirty-eight of the crew.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Japanese soldier and his individual entity as a unit of the great fighting force—The manner in which he takes care of himself under all sorts of circumstances—An idea of his camp life when on active service—His implicit obedience to orders, and his remarkable patience —The effect of the reading of an Imperial message upon the soldier —Some of his peculiarities, and the worst of his few serious faults as a soldier.

A CLOSE study of the Japanese soldier when on active service is one full of the most absorbing interest to the student of human nature. Though he may be regarded as a fatalist, it would be a serious mistake to consider him in the light of a fanatic. He is willing to die for his Emperor, but he does not want to die any more than the soldiers of other countries want to die. Yet there is a marked difference between the manner in which he regards his duty as a soldier and the manner in which the soldiers of Western countries regard their duty. This difference begins with the incentive. No other ruler in the civilized world occupies the position of the Mikado of Japan. He represents and stands for everything his nation regards as sacred, and, because of all he stands for, his soldiers are ready at all times to die for him. Though the casual visitor to the country would not suspect it, the women of Japan instil the first lesson. The child is taught that he is born to serve the Emperor, and that every boy must become a soldier; therefore he must at all

times be prepared to die. To properly instil this fundamental idea in the minds of their offspring is as much the duty of the women as to meet death bravely is the duty of the men of the country. The mother who fails in this duty is looked down upon, because in so failing she brings disgrace upon the houses of both her husband and her father, and is known as the mother of a son who is afraid to perform his first duty as a citizen. This creed did not come to Japan with the influences of Western civilization. It is as old as the country itself. And these mothers love the sons they send to be killed for the sake of the Emperor. No one could doubt this fact who has stood upon the platforms of the railway stations and witnessed the departure of trainloads of soldiers for the front. Times without number I have seen the platforms thronged with dry-eyed women and quaint, observant, stoical children who came to say a last good-bye to their nearest and dearest who were departing for the front. There was no falling into one another's arms, no shedding of tears, no demonstration of grief. There was only the usual respectful salutation, where the departing ones bowed their heads close to the ground three times, each time with a hissing indrawn breath indicative of respect, while those who were losing, in their opinion forever, their nearest and dearest upon earth, went solemnly through the same performance. A thousand times I have watched this last leave-taking ceremonial with the most profound interest and closest attention. Only once or twice have I seen the eyes of a mother fill with unbidden tears as the train pulled out of the station bearing away her only son, in her opinion to certain

death in the service of the Emperor. More often have I seen the young sister, the small boy, brother or son, or daughter of tender years, vainly struggle to fight back rebellious tears with a determination most pathetic as their dear ones passed from them. As often as one saw this sight the great and cruel unnaturalness of it appealed with a new force. Too often one looked and easily found in the eyes of those who were bound for the front, as well as those who came to say farewell, plentiful evidence of hearts torn with grief and souls oppressed with all the hopelessness of despair. Despite all the efforts made to cover up their feelings under the cloak of a stoical resignation, the grim monster of despair always appeared in their usually unexpressive eyes, and absolute collapse followed in many cases the strain demanded by convention of covering up the natural feelings under a cloak of stoicism until the hour of parting was over. The conviction that death is the natural outcome of service may make the man a better soldier,—it probably does,—but it is cruel past telling to those who are left behind. When the common school system was universally established in Japan, the development of the fundamental idea of duty to the Emperor, first instilled by the mothers, was made one of the chief aims of the system of instruction. Children, both male and female, were well grounded in all that this duty would require of them in after-life. Boys were taught to develop their physical strength so that they would be better fit to serve as soldiers in the army later on, and were always impressed with the idea that when they grew up the duty would devolve upon them of fighting and dying for the Emperor. Girls

were made to understand that a mother's first duty was to train her male offspring so that they would prove always willing to give their lives when demanded for the Mikado.

Trained by their mothers to meet death, sent to the front by their nearest relatives, who expect them to give their lives for the Emperor, convinced that the cause is worth dying for, the Japanese conscripts are prepared, when they go upon active service, to accept and live up to the very high standard expected of them in the army. It is the same standard which has been required of fighting men in Japan since the earliest days in the nation's history, the creed of the ancient Samurai of feudal days, which demanded death before defeat, and no surrender. The fact that the army has always been largely officered by Samurai, who through heredity were born with this idea of military service, made it possible to secure the observance of a standard so much higher than could reasonably be expected from the common soldiers who in feudal days were not warriors. In nearly every army it is well known that where the officers lead the men will follow. The Japanese officers always lead their men. For a Japanese soldier not to follow, no matter where he was led, would bring upon him a punishment worse than death itself. He would be ostracized by his comrades-in-arms, he would be despised by his officers, and, worst of all, he would be disowned by his family, denounced by his mother, and reviled by his acquaintances. It is almost impossible for foreigners to realize fully all that this means. The effect upon the soldier is so strong, that he has to be courageous and face death whether he wishes

to or not, for the alternative is too terrible to even contemplate. These are the conditions under which the soldier of Japan leaves his native shores to fight for the Emperor in the present war with Russia. His duty lies before him without one single consideration to stay him. To fail in the performance of that duty would mean everlasting disgrace, not only to himself during his life but to his family also, and to his children after his death. Over his tomb no stone would be raised and no incense burned by his children and relatives to his spirit, in order that some inspiration might be caught from the great deeds he performed in life to help them pass worthily through some trying ordeal. When these considerations are fully understood and their impelling strength appreciated, it is possible to realize how it is an entire Japanese army will meet an enemy, not glad, but absolutely prepared, to die.

It must not be thought that this conviction, that death is the logical outcome of service, makes the soldier careless as to whether he dies or not, and negligent in looking after himself while on active service. There are no soldiers in the world who know better how to take care of themselves under all sorts of conditions than do the Japanese. The investing army before Port Arthur fought almost continuously through all kinds of weather, winter and summer, and the total number of casualties sustained from sickness was only between twenty-five and thirty thousand, of whom more than fifteen thousand succumbed to an epidemic of beri-beri caused wholly by the steady rice diet. Considering the very trying weather, the length of time the army occupied one camp, the terrible

odour from decaying bodies, and the scourge of flies and mosquitoes which came in consequence, bringing with them all sorts of disease germs, the sick list was as small as any army could expect to have. This immunity from sickness was due almost entirely to the personal cleanliness of the troops and the splendid manner in which they looked after themselves, even in the front lines. When in full marching order every soldier carries with him in his knapsack a small brown waterproofed calico sheet about four and a half feet in length and three and a half feet in width, and a number of small jointed wooden poles about half an inch in diameter. These sheets are used in common by the rank and file of a company, and long rows of shelter tents erected. Each soldier also carries a single blanket, and these are used in common, with the result that in summer weather, without depending upon transport at all, an entire army can make itself comfortable in shelters made from what the men carry with them. Tents are used by the officers, but only in permanent camps. At other times they use similar shelters to those used by the men. During the cold winter months the soldiers dig themselves into the ground in a very clever manner. A regiment, for instance, will select a site for a permanent winter camp. If this site is upon the steep slope of a hill,—as they generally were at Port Arthur,—the slope is first converted into a series of narrow terraces with a system of paths and staircases. Utilizing the perpendicular wall of earth created by making the terrace as a back wall for the shelter, a long low wall of earth or stones is then constructed to form the front wall.

If the camp is only to be occupied for a short time, waterproof sheets constitute the roof, but if it is designed to be a more or less permanent abode, say for weeks or months, a few wooden poles are stretched across as rafters to carry Chinese mats, made of koilang or Chinese corn-stalks, with a thin layer of dried mud upon the top. If the camp is located upon level ground, the whole space to be utilized is carefully laid out first, with companies and regiments together. Long trenches about seven feet in width are then excavated to a depth of about four feet, and the earth removed converted into a wall or bank upon the north side. These trenches are then roofed in either with waterproof sheeting or a more permanent roofing. The whole camp is well drained, so that no surface water can find its way into the underground shelters in the event of warm wet weather. When the weather is very cold, charcoal and wood are served out by the army service corps for the purpose of heating the shelters. It is amazing how cozy and comfortable the troops succeed in making themselves even during the coldest weather when there is snow upon the ground. The staple food of the army is rice, which is boiled in the regimental or camp kitchens. Rows of huge iron pots, capable of holding a bushel or more of rice, are built with stones and mud into a protected fireplace, and in these the rice is boiled in large quantities and served out to details from each company. Tea is usually made by the men themselves in their mess tins, though there is always an abundance of hot water in the regimental kitchens. If any portion of a regiment happened to be on duty in the advance trenches, details from the

portion in reserve were selected to take hot food to those in the front lines. When meat or vegetables are served with the rice, they are always cooked in the regimental kitchens, and served out in large, covered tin-pails. As a rule the Japanese are not very particular how their food is served, and some of their ideas of sanitation are, to say the least, crude and imperfect. The result was some exceedingly dirty and most unsanitary regimental and camp kitchens. The living quarters of the men, on the other hand, were invariably clean and in a splendid sanitary condition. When not on duty the Japanese soldier is exceedingly quiet and well behaved. He is a great letter-writer, and that occupies much of his spare time. It is very seldom indeed that one sees boisterous amusements indulged in to any extent in any of the camps.

One of the most noticeable characteristics of the Japanese soldier is his implicit obedience to orders. Though there are few armies in which the discipline is more perfect, the relations which exist between the officers and the men are of the most cordial nature. For over five months I lived in the midst of a camp of from eighty to one hundred thousand men, and during all that time I did not find a single case of insubordination. Upon many occasions I questioned officers on this subject, and asked if such cases did not occur at times. Yes, I was informed, such cases did occur, but very seldom, and when they did happen it was usually found that the officer was to blame. It is a serious thing for an officer to have cases of insubordination occur in his command, because it is always taken as evidence of incompetence

on his part. In the army every soldier, it is assumed, is not only willing, but anxious to perform his various duties. More than that, the same incentive which is strong enough to make the soldier anxious to perform his duties, also induces him to profoundly respect his officer, who is regarded as the representative of the Emperor. This fact is an additional incentive to the officer to show a good example to his men, not only in battle, but also in the daily routine of camp life. Usually the soldiers have a great respect, and sometimes a remarkable affection, for their officers. Personal courage and reckless bravery in battle always win for an officer the deepest devotion of his men, and where he leads they will always follow to a man. The whole thing goes back to the initial idea of the tremendous incentive to serve. The officer regards his men as the instruments placed in his hands to win victories for the Emperor. He assumes that they are all inspired with the same devotion to that idea as he is, and for an officer to act in an overbearing manner to his men would simply win their pity and contempt, and the utter disgust of his fellow-officers. During the entire time the siege lasted I looked carefully for evidences of officers shirking their full measure of danger and responsibility, and I have to confess that I was unable to find even an isolated case. Too often there were errors made in the opposite direction. This is proved by the fact that among the officers alone during the siege there were over ten thousand casualties. The system of selecting non-commissioned officers in the Japanese army is a splendid one. To begin with, there are three grades among the soldiers.

The lowest is the second-class soldier, the next the first-class soldier, and the highest the superior soldier. These grades are gained absolutely upon the basis of merit and efficiency, and they carry with them certain privileges and responsibilities. The promotions to the rank of non-commissioned officers are always made from among the superior soldiers. This system creates a healthy rivalry among the men, and ensures a plentiful supply of well-trained material for non-commissioned officers. Although the discipline in the army is exceedingly severe, the non-commissioned officers are given considerable opportunity for the display of individual initiative. There were any number of cases during the siege where private soldiers even undertook desperate missions upon their own initiative; such, for instance, as the removing of two automatic quick-firers from behind one of the enemy's barricades upon the roof of one of the caponiers in the moat of the East Urh-lung fort, an incident which is related in another chapter. The average of intelligence among the rank and file is exceedingly high. This is due, first, to the universal system of compulsory education throughout every part of the Empire; and second, because an enormous amount of study is necessary in order for a Japanese to attain any facility in speaking and writing his own language well. It is safe to say that there is not more than one in ten of the rank and file generally who cannot both read and write, and there are not a few who in addition are able to speak either French, German, or English. This gives some conception of the general average of intelligence, which, of course, is the measure of

the personal initiative permitted to, and assumed by, the common soldiers. With the exception perhaps of the Chinese, there is no more philosophical people in the world than the Japanese. This gives them an immovability and patience which would be impossible to Western troops. Wonderfully was this demonstrated in the extensive sapping operations carried on by the investing army before Port Arthur. Dozens of times have I seen sections of trenches, constructed under a galling fire, destroyed by the enemy's artillery and sortie parties over and over again, only to be immediately rebuilt under the same conditions. In the matter of patience and perseverance these troops have no equals among the troops of other civilized nations.

Invariably just prior to a general engagement a message was received from the Emperor addressed to the officers and men of the army, expressing gratification at what they had accomplished, and intimating that it was the Imperial desire that with increased energies the army should complete the task assigned to it. As soon as these messages were received by Army Headquarters, they were sent on to the headquarters of the various divisions. A copy was then sent to the commanding officer of every regiment, and, in special regimental orders, read to the men by companies. The occasion was always regarded as an exceedingly solemn one, and for that reason it was not easy for a foreigner to obtain permission to be present and watch the effect upon the troops. Partly by accident, and partly through the kindness of a Japanese officer who accompanied me, I was present when one of these Imperial messages was

read to one of the regiments of the ninth division. It was a solemn occasion, one of the most intensely solemn imaginable. As the words of the Mikado "to you officers and men of Our Third Army" were read, no one could fail to notice the tremendous effect they had upon the soldiers. It seemed as though every officer and man present received the message in a purely personal sense. That the Emperor should express his expectation that they would, with increased energies, complete the task assigned to them, meant more than any foreigner could fully understand. The men looked what they felt, and they looked like men who had decided the matter in their own minds—on the morrow they were to die. It was a wonderful sight to see a whole regiment of men with that fixed, determined look in their faces. One instinctively felt that these soldiers had not one reserve note. They had simply sentenced themselves to death, and no one expected reprieve. Those who lived would see the victory; those who died would die conscious that their deaths had helped achieve it. Many strange and wonderful things were to be seen by a foreigner living for months with these troops, but there was nothing more intensely impressive than the effect of the reading of an Imperial message upon the eve of a great battle. It told more about why the Japanese are good soldiers, and why they have never yet been beaten, than all other reasons put together. For instance, the Japanese officer, through whose kindness I had heard the message read, and watched its effect, stood like a stone image until the ceremony was over. Then he turned to me and said, "Let us go and have some

saké." "But," I replied, "you do not drink saké." "No," he said, "not usually, but you see it does not matter; I will not see you again, for to-morrow I die." The man spoke English perfectly, and I at once turned upon him and asked him if he had really given up all hope of going through all right. He quickly replied that he had not thought at all about going through all right. That was not the way he went into a fight. There would be plenty of opportunities for an officer to do what he would not do if he expected to come through all right. If, on the other hand, he was prepared and had made up his mind to die, he would do those things, and his men would get inspiration from his sacrifice. If he was to have the idea of going through all right, he would be cautious. If he was cautious, so would his men. A cautious army never won a hard fight. "I have sworn to do all I can to bring victory to-morrow," concluded the officer with an earnestness that could not be doubted, "and I will die to bring it. My efforts may be as nothing in the gaining of the result, but my example may be a great deal. That is why I say I will die to-morrow." It was after the reading of the Imperial message that I discovered for the first time a remarkable peculiarity of the Japanese soldiers, which applies to the highest officer and the lowest soldier alike. They will not go into a general engagement dirty, or in old clothing. All night long before a big fight it was always possible to find long lines of soldiers waiting their turn to use the hot baths which are to be found in every camp. These baths are made of large Chinese "congs" or earthenware pots, which

are sunk into the ground and a fire lighted under them, so that the water in them is heated almost to boiling point. In these every soldier bathes, and then proceeds to put on clean clothing throughout. Often I asked why this was done, but the only answer I could ever get was, that no Japanese soldier would die dirty if he could possibly help it. Doubtless there is another and a deeper reason.

The Japanese soldier has not many serious faults, but he has a few. He always under-estimates his enemy, and as a result pays heavily in life for the mistake. His method of advancing for attack is not in lines, but in company groups, and these groups are always too heavily massed. There seems to be a great disinclination on the part of the soldiers to act individually at such times; and even in the first advances, before the time for meeting the enemy hand to hand comes, the troops gather too much in compact bodies. The result is that machine guns and shell fire work awful havoc among them. These faults cost many casualties during the siege of Port Arthur, before bitter experience taught its usual lesson. Generally speaking, however, the Japanese is as nearly perfect an infantry soldier as can be found in any part of the world.

CHAPTER XXV

The tragic death of Major-General Kondrachenko in the North Keekwan fort, and what his loss meant to the garrison—The work of mining the forts, and the explosion of the mines under the North Keekwan fort—The successful assault which followed directed by Lieutenant-General Samejima—The torpedo attacks made by the navy on the battleship *Sevastopol* and the gunboat *Otvazny*—The sinking of the Japanese cruiser *Takasago*—The visit of Admiral Togo to Army Headquarters.

DURING the days when the struggle was going on for possession of the 203 Metre Hill position, the troops in front of the guarding forts on the western half of the line of defence east of the city were busily engaged driving mine shafts under the forts from the filled-in moats. Upon the afternoon of the 13th of December a desultory fire from the big howitzer batteries was kept up against the North Keekwan fort. For over two months these bigs guns had been steadily pounding the concrete casemates inside the fort with their heavy shells. The casemates had at first resisted, but with the continual fire the concrete was beginning to show signs of disintegration. It appears that during the time this bombardment was going on Major-General Kondrachenko, in command of the seventh division of infantry, who up till this time had been the virtual commander of the fortress position and the life and soul of the defence, was engaged holding a conference with a colonel of the engineering corps,

and the commander of the fort, deciding upon plans to defeat by means of counter-tunnels the efforts of the Japanese to explode mines under the fort. With that extraordinary bad luck which seemed to follow the Russians in every move made throughout the war, it so happened that one of the shells from the big howitzers broke through the roof of the casemate in which the conference was taking place. General Kondrachenko and eight other officers who were present at the conference were killed by the explosion of the shell. It is impossible to begin to estimate the extent to which Kondrachenko's death was a terrible disaster to the defending garrison. He must have been a man with a wonderful personality, for even with all the jealousies which were rife in Port Arthur during the siege, General Kondrachenko seemed on almost every occasion to get what he wanted. General Stoessel, who was in command, placed the greatest reliance in him and his judgment, and he it was who evolved the plans of defence and saw that they were properly carried into execution. He was respected by the officers of the garrison and loved by the rank and file. Day and night he spent about the positions, going from line to line, and giving personal attention to every detail of the defence. His removal at this critical time was a disaster greater than any other that could possibly have happened, for with his tragic death the resisting powers of the Russian garrison ended. Had he lived, there is not the slightest doubt Port Arthur would not have been taken as it was. Under his direct command the Russian troops would have fought until the end, as they had fought

during the earlier days of the siege, and, as a matter of fact, up till the very day his death took place. After the fall of Port Arthur I had an opportunity of talking with nearly all the senior officers in both the navy and the army. There were many differences of opinion with regard to the conduct of almost every other senior officer, but with regard to Kondrachenko the mere mention of his name was sufficient to evoke expressions of the greatest praise in all quarters. Whoever else had failed, it was generally admitted that Kondrachenko had been the life and soul of the defence from the time the fortress was invested until the day he met his death.

It was announced at Army Headquarters that the explosion of the mines under the North Keekwan fort would take place about noon on the 18th, and that an assault in force would follow immediately after, by which it was confidently expected the fort would be captured. The sappers had run two main shafts from the north escarpment under the walls of the fort for a distance of about forty feet. From these two main tunnels there were three branch shafts. Two heavy mine charges were placed at the farthest extremity of the main, and five smaller ones in the three branch tunnels under the fort. Altogether something like a ton of explosives, dynamite and gun-cotton, was the total charge. It had been the intention of the enemy to countermine, but after the death of General Kondrachenko nothing of that kind seemed to have been attempted. This fort had so often successfully resisted the most determined efforts at capture that preparations for the assault which was to follow the

explosion of the mines had been most elaborately and carefully made. Major-General Tsuchiya, who had commanded the eleventh division since it landed in the Liáotung peninsula, had been seriously wounded during the general assault on the 26th of November, and had been succeeded in his command by Lieut.-General Samejima. The new divisional commander knew a good deal about what the taking of a strong permanent fort by assault meant, for he had previous to the war been for many years the commander of the fortifications at Yukoska, one of the large naval depots in Japan. He had come to Port Arthur in command of the engineering corps, and had exercised a general direction over the sapping operations and the subsequent work of mining the forts. No general could have been better fitted by professional qualifications and experience to conduct the assault. Every detail of the preparations was attended to by General Samejima, and he personally directed the successful assault which resulted in the capture of the fort. It is interesting to note in this connection that the arrangements made created a good deal of jealousy and ill-feeling among the troops of the division. Taking the ground that the twenty-second regiment, which had done all the sapping work and had gone through the desperate struggle for possession of the moat defences, had been too long fighting about this particular fort, and were too much impressed with its great strength to make a successful assault, he secured the services of the thirty-eighth regiment of second reserves from the general reserves of the army, and proposed to retire the twenty-second regiment

and allow the new troops, all of whom were old soldiers, to make the assault. This naturally caused much ill-feeling among the officers and men of the twenty-second regiment, who claimed, that inasmuch as they had done all the preparatory work, they ought to be allowed the first opportunity of taking the fort by assault. The justice of this claim was admitted, and it was decided to have two attacking columns. The soil of the fort hill was of a dull reddish-brown colour, and in order that the columns making the assaults after the explosions would not show up black against the new red soil turned up, and over which they would have to advance to gain the fort interior, the General resorted to a clever expedient. All the soldiers had in their winter kits, which had just been served out, dark brown woollen under-drawers, jerseys, and Balaclava caps. The men were ordered to wear these articles of apparel over their dark-blue uniforms. They were certainly a remarkable-looking aggregation when they gathered in the parallels before going up the forthill. All that could be seen of the soldiers was their faces, for the Balaclava cap came down over the head to the collar of the jersey, leaving only a small aperture for the face. Around their waists the men had their belts and ammunition-pouches. Slung over the right shoulder, in the form of a bandolier, they had a piece of straw rope to which were attached three or four dynamite hand-grenades. In order to be able to light the fuses of the grenades they had a tow slow-match wound around their waists over their belts. Just before going into action these matches were lighted, so that the soldiers

were able at any moment to pull a grenade from the rope bandolier and light the fuse from the slow-match about their waists. The column from the twenty-second regiment was to make the first assault from the caponier galleries underneath the counterscarp of the moat just as soon as the explosions had occurred. They were distinguished by a narrow strip of white cotton worn as an army badge. The second column, consisting of the thirty-eighth regiment of second reserves, were posted close to the top of the forthill in the sapping trenches. They were to make the second assault, and were distinguished by a narrow strip of red cotton worn as an army badge. General Samejima had attended to all these arrangements personally, and accompanied the second column to its positions in the sapping trenches before the explosions occurred, so as to be able to personally direct the assaults upon the spot. All the men of the assaulting columns were volunteers, and there was the greatest possible rivalry among them as to which of the two should gain the honour of taking by assault the first permanent fort in the enemy's line of defence. Owing to the fuse wires for setting off the mines being broken by the explosion of a dynamite grenade thrown over the fort wall, the explosions were delayed until about two o'clock.

When the mines were set off the sight was a wonderful one in the extreme. It looked as if the entire fort had been sent heavenwards. Huge clouds of earth, pieces of timber, sections of concrete, and all sorts of débris rose up into the air fully two hundred feet. For a minute or two these dense clouds hung like a pall over the broken

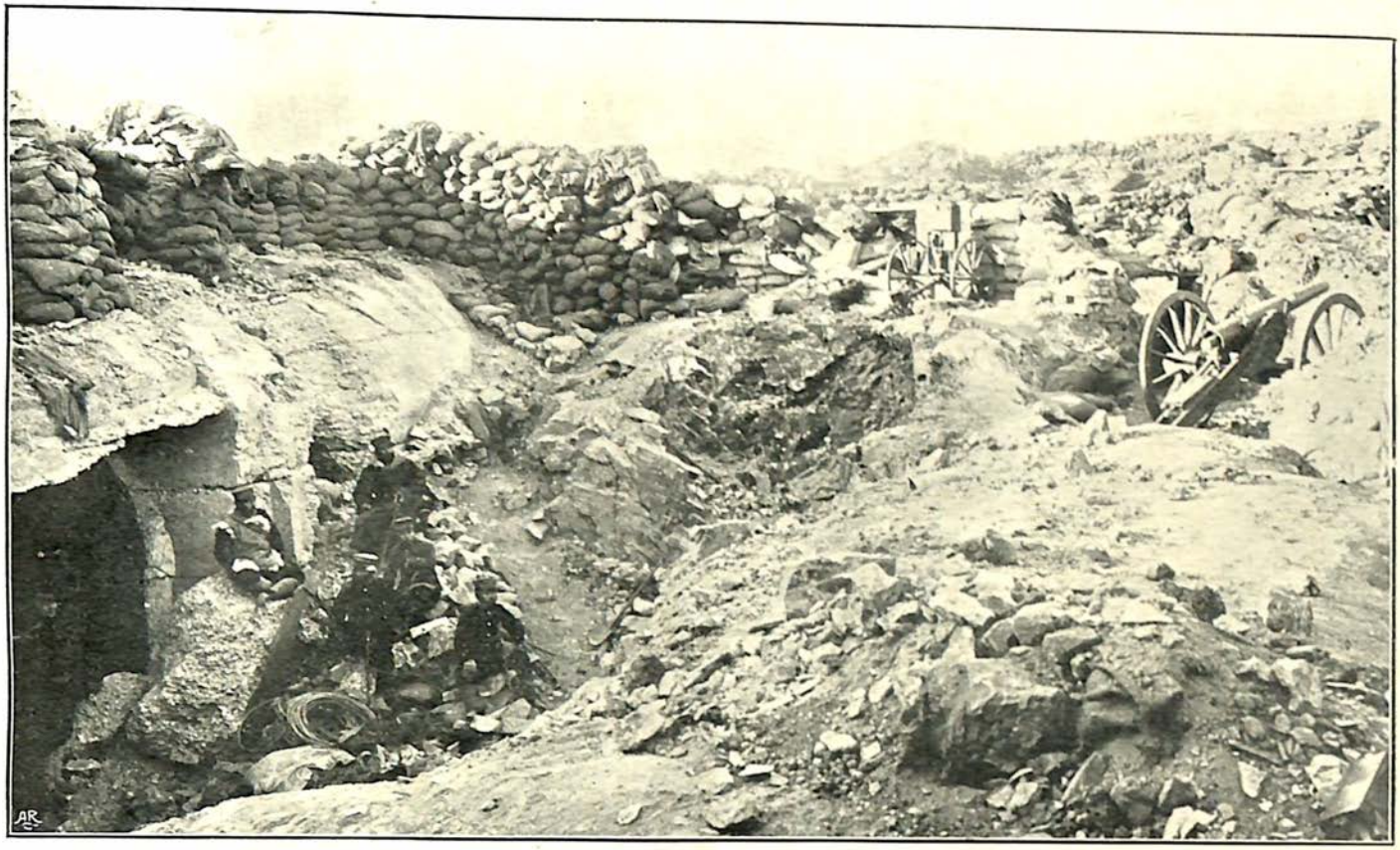
fort, shutting out the view, then slowly settled down. There had been a heavy fall of snow the previous day, and before the explosions the forthill had been covered with a mantle of white. As the great clouds of reddish-brown earth descended, the whole surface for a radius of a thousand yards or more about the forthill was changed to brownish red. The mine under the north-west section of the fort had been first exploded. Owing to the enormous resisting strength of the heavy concrete it had to lift, the explosion was not very successful. In a second or two after, the second heavy mine was fired and with it the five smaller ones. The last explosion was tremendously effective. Two great breaches were made in the north walls, and the whole interior appeared to have been completely destroyed. At a short distance from the scene all the explosions seemed to have taken place at the same moment. Immediately after the first mine was fired, and before the second explosion occurred, the first storming party from the caponier galleries under the counterscarp of the moats commenced advancing up the fort walls. They had started too soon, for over fifty of them were buried under the débris from the second explosion. The attacking column, about a battalion strong, was, however, safely under cover at the time, only a few men having gained the open moat. The huge brownish clouds which obscured the view of what was going on had not yet cleared away when the storming party emerged from cover and swarmed up through the great breach made in the north wall, with their bayonets fixed. Even at a short distance away the bayonets flashing in the sunlight was all that could be seen, for the

unique costumes of the men harmonized so well with the new earth over which they advanced that they were unrecognizable. In a second or two a fusilade of rifle fire indicated that they had reached the interior of the fort. Though the troops of the garrison which had manned the trenches behind the north and the front sections of the east and west walls had been killed by the force of the explosions, practically the whole of the rear sections of the fort had not been destroyed. Although they were seamed with great cracks, the heavy concrete barracks or keep in the rear of the fort had remained intact, and the machine-gun casemates had not been damaged. When the assaulting column reached the crest of a great mound thrown up by the force of the explosions inside the north wall, it was met with a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the rear and undamaged sections. Further progress was not easy, for in order to get at the positions occupied by the enemy it was necessary to gain the lower level of the fort from the crest of this mound. Its slopes were steep and terribly swept by rifle and machine-gun fire from the concrete defensive works in the rear sections. Twice small parties endeavoured to make the descent, but they were all killed. In the meantime the second assaulting column had been delayed in reaching the fort, because the débris from the explosions had filled up the heads of the sapping trenches leading to the moat, so that they had first to be excavated before the troops could gain entrance. Finally, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the way was cleared. General Samejima with a couple of his staff officers made his way to the crest of the mound where

the first body of assaulters had been stopped from farther progress by the enemy's fire. Seeing that the men were afraid to take on the desperate game of advancing down the bullet-swept declivity and closing with the enemy, he ordered the entire column to retire, and brought up the men from the thirty-eighth regiment of second reserves. By this time it was after five o'clock, and just beginning to get dark. The first company of the new attacking column was led by Captain Yawamoto, an old and experienced soldier. He carefully disposed his men under cover along the crest of the declivity leading to the lower interior level of the fort, and ordered them to make the descent in twos and threes. This order was cleverly carried out, and in an hour's time one hundred and fifty men had safely gained the lower level, and had found cover in the craters formed by the explosion of big howitzer shells. Practically the whole battalion followed, and by seven o'clock everything was in readiness for the first assault. It must have been a weird sight for the Russian garrison to see these strangely-attired soldiers advancing upon them, as one of their officers afterwards remarked, "more like devils than men, with slow-matches lighted at their waists." The first assault was unsuccessful, but in the second the Japanese gained a footing inside the barracks or keep. Until midnight the fighting continued in these concrete chambers at close quarters, principally with hand-grenades. The place might have been rushed with the bayonet in half the time and with fewer casualties, but during the fighting upon 203 Metre Hill, and all which followed, one could not help noticing that the Japanese would never take on the bayonet

if they could help it. They were prepared to take all sorts of punishment at close quarters and use grenades, rather than get in with the bayonet and finish at once. It is difficult to account for this strange disinclination of soldiers, as brave as they certainly were, to take on what is generally regarded as the last test of a soldier's courage. Perhaps the superior stature and greater physical strength of the Russian soldiers may have had something to do with it, but the Japanese were infinitely more active, and that after all counts for more than either stature or strength in the use of the bayonet. Whatever the reason was, time and time again I have seen assaulting columns advance to well within charging distance with their bayonets fixed, and then, instead of finishing the business with a rush, commence throwing hand-grenades. Of course they suffered more, but it did not seem to make any difference. Towards the end of the siege the bayonet was only used when it was absolutely necessary, and sometimes not even then. About midnight a party of twenty Russians, the sole survivors of the garrison of over five hundred men, made good their escape at the last moment, and while retiring exploded four mines in the passage-way which led to the gorge in rear of the fort, thus stopping any possibility of pursuit, as the passage was completely blocked with débris. It had been a desperate fight, and the enemy's casualties are sufficient evidence of the manner in which he fought. Those who were there said afterwards that it was one of the bitterest struggles of the siege, and that the garrison fought with splendid courage, taking annihilation from superior numbers rather than retire. It is inter-

esting to note that in the last assaults the Japanese troops went into action singing war-songs to keep up the spirits of the men in this final contest for possession of the forts which had during the siege cost them so many thousand casualties. When the victory had been finally achieved, General Samejima, who had personally directed the assaults from the parapets, summoned the officers, and upon the scene of victory, with the dead and wounded lying all about in the ruins of the first permanent fort which had been taken, proposed the health of the Emperor, which was enthusiastically received with vigorous "Banzais." The cheer was taken up by the garrison of the "P" entrenched hill, and by the soldiers in the sapping trenches under the "Q" battery position, and for a time this portion of the front lines rang with shouts of victory. The thirty-eighth regiment of second reserves, to whom the credit for this successful assault belonged, formed a portion of the general reserves of the army which were under the direct command of General Nogi. They had been selected for the work because they had seen similar service in the former siege of Port Arthur, and because their officers had all been through the same experience. The Japanese casualties were about five hundred, and the enemy about the same number, all of whom had been killed except two or three wounded. With the forts were captured five badly smashed field guns, four automatic quick-firers, four machine guns, and a large quantity of ammunition. A few days after its capture I visited the fort, and was taken over the ruins by one of the officers who had been present at the last assault. The destruction which had been wrought by the



Interior of the North Keekwan Fort after its capture, showing a section of the caponier galleries, in which the underground fighting lasted more than a month.

explosion of the mines was very great. In fact it was almost impossible to get any adequate idea of what the fort had looked like before they occurred. Only the rear sections with the barracks and the ammunition hoist were recognizable, the rest was nothing more than heaps of débris with broken guns and sections of concrete lying all about. Inside the concrete barracks and the half-ruined casemates there was ample evidence to be seen of the extensive use of dynamite grenades in the last struggle. There were only a few dead lying about, as most of the bodies had been removed to enable the soldiers to use the cover the buildings afforded from the fire of the enemy behind the Chinese Wall in rear, which was very heavy. While having tiffin with General Samejima and some of his staff officers afterwards, at divisional headquarters, I asked why it was that the twenty-second regiment had not been allowed to have the honour of capturing the fort they had worked so hard to reduce. "Much against my judgment," the General replied, "the twenty-second regiment was given an opportunity of capturing the fort because they asked for it, but they had been too long fighting about the place, and had too thorough a knowledge of its great strength. After they had advanced and been some time under fire near the crest of the mound caused by the mine explosions, I went up to see why it was they were not making more progress. It was not hard to see the reason. There was fear written in the faces of the men. I did not wonder or blame them, because it had always been my conviction from the first that the final assault should have been taken on by new troops. They had done good work, but they

were finished for an assault upon that fort at any rate."

As a result of the Japanese bombardment, after the capture of 203 Metre Hill all the larger warships of the Russian fleet in the harbour had been sunk except the battleship *Sevastopol* and the gunboat *Otvazny*, both of which had escaped from the harbour and anchored outside. With the object of completing the work of destruction, Admiral Togo decided to attack these two warships with his torpedo-craft flotillas. During the afternoon of the 13th of December, while engaged in covering the work of a torpedo-craft flotilla which was conducting a reconnaissance of the position of the enemy's warship the *Sevastopol*, the cruiser *Takasago* struck a mine and went to the bottom almost immediately with her officers and crew, except the captain and some eighty men who were rescued. The first torpedo attack upon the *Sevastopol* and the *Otvazny* took place about midnight on the 14th. Five torpedo-craft flotillas were engaged. In turn the different detachments sailed boldly inshore under a heavy bombardment from the ship's guns and the shore batteries and discharged their torpedoes. The third detachment had the hardest time of it, and one torpedo boat was so badly damaged by shell fire that she sank in deep water with the most of her crew. This was the last naval disaster which occurred to the Japanese fleet in front of Port Arthur. The casualties in this attack were very heavy, and a number of the boats were considerably damaged by shell fire. The officers and crews of the torpedo craft displayed the most splendid courage, and at short distances several torpedoes were seen to explode, some of

them inside the torpedo netting which protected the Russian battleship. The second attack was made upon the following night during a heavy snowstorm. This time only two flotillas were engaged. The falling snow rendered the enemy's searchlights of little use, and the torpedo craft were able to approach to within one hundred yards of the *Sevastopol* and the *Otvazny*, as well as a number of the Russian torpedo craft which were also anchored outside the harbour. One of the Russian torpedo craft was so badly damaged in the attack that she had to be beached by her crew upon the shore near the Golden Hill forts. The *Sevastopol* was also struck by at least one torpedo. The following morning it was plain that the battleship had been seriously damaged, for she was badly listed, and her gun deck was close to the water. On the afternoon of the 20th, Admiral Togo visited the headquarters of the army in front of Port Arthur, for the purpose of examining the condition of the *Sevastopol* from a watch-tower upon the shore near the eastern fort-ridge. After this examination Admiral Togo expressed the opinion that the warship had been so badly damaged during the torpedo attacks that she was of no further use. The same evening the Admiral returned to his flagship at Dalny. Later the Russians, by means of a pumping ship, succeeded in floating the *Sevastopol* to deep water, and there sank her, so that she might not fall into the hands of the Japanese.

CHAPTER XXVI

The capture of essential positions in the enemy's outer line of defence beyond 203 Metre Hill, and the advance towards the inner line—Sapping operations commenced against the Chair Hill forts—The alleged bombardment of Russian hospitals—The explosion of mines under the East Urhlung fort, and the series of assaults which resulted in its capture—The Russian counter-attack —The destruction of the army and navy depots in Port Arthur by shell fire.

THE Japanese were not slow in taking advantage of the opportunity which the capture of 203 Metre Hill gave them to break through and capture the Russian outer line of defence between that hill and the shores of Pigeon Bay. That they moved rapidly, took big chances, and allowed the enemy no time to recover from the effect of repulse after repulse, is shown by the fact that before the suspension of hostilities on the 2nd of January they had taken the Ya-hu-thwei position in the inner line, thereby sequestering the two groups of forts west of the city from each other and the town as well. Of course, if the defence had been as vigorous and as well sustained as it was during the earlier days of the siege, all this would have been impossible of accomplishment in the time, but there is no doubt that ultimately, no matter how strong the defence might have been, the same result would have been accomplished. The rapidity with which the Japanese captured the outer line, and penetrated the inner line of defence west of the city, is liable to create

the impression that the capture of 203 Metre Hill left both of these lines absolutely open to capture. That would be a wholly erroneous impression. After the capture of 203 Metre Hill the Japanese artillery were in a large measure able to dominate the essential position in the outer line, but the only reason why the troops of the besieging army were able so quickly to penetrate the inner line was the knowledge the Russian soldiers had that the whole game was up before the attack was made by the Japanese upon the Ya-hu-thwei position. Otherwise there would have been a desperate fight. The Army Staff themselves expected this, for during the first weeks in December they moved two of the 11-inch howitzers from the east flank near Ta-ku-shan to the west flank, to reinforce the battery which did such good work in the capture of the 203 Metre Hill position. The very day General Stoessel made his offer to surrender the fortress a newly-arrived battery of six 4.7-inch naval guns was also being moved from the railway line to the west flank. This indicated two things very clearly: first, that though they had captured the first line of defence upon the west flank at that time, they fully expected to have a hard and desperate fight before they would be able to penetrate the inner line; and, second, that Army Headquarters had not the smallest idea that surrender was even likely. In fact, it was only a few days before Stoessel's offer was received that Major-General Ijichi, the Chief of the Staff, made the definite statement that he was convinced that the Russian garrison would fight to the bitter end.

The fact that the closing in of the lines of investment upon the west flank, rendered possible by the capture of 203 Metre Hill, proved much easier than was anticipated, does not in any way detract from the prompt and skilful manner in which the obvious advantage of that victory was followed up by the troops of the first and seventh divisions. There was no resting upon the laurels of success. Two days after 203 Metre Hill was in their possession, the troops of the seventh division occupied the first hill in the outer line south-west of the captured position. There was no fight to speak of, because the Russians, knowing the position was dominated by the artillery upon 203 Metre Hill, retired as the troops of the besieging army advanced. Before daylight upon the morning of the 16th the second strong position in the line was captured after a hard fight which lasted five hours, the enemy being reinforced from the North Taiyangkow fort. The third position was captured on the morning of the 18th after a short engagement. The last and strongest position in the line was a ridge of heights close to the Chinese village of How-sang-yang-tao, near the shores of Pigeon Bay. The taking of the position opened the way to the inner line between the South Taiyangkow fort and the base of Lao-tieh-shan. Seeing that the position was feebly held, Major-General Baba, in command of the first brigade of the first division, ordered the troops of the first regiment of his brigade to make a night attack upon the enemy's position, which was captured after four hours' fighting. After the heights had been won, the Russians, upon a small but lofty

promontory extending out into Pigeon Bay, opened a serious enfilading fire upon the captured position with two field guns. Orders were at once issued that this second position should be attacked. At seven o'clock in the morning it was occupied after a feeble resistance, and one of the field guns taken. The besieging army had now gained possession of the entire outer line of defence from 203 Metre Hill to the shores of Pigeon Bay. Not only was the way to the second line now opened, but the entire shore-line of Pigeon Bay was commanded, so that no more junk traffic could come into Port Arthur from that direction. The objective of the advance was now the strong semi-permanent infantry works upon the heights near the Chinese village of Ya-hu-thwei upon the lower foothills of Lao-tieh-shan, the weakest link in the chain of positions which formed the inner line of defence upon the enemy's west flank. This chain of positions consisted of the heights of Ya-hu-thwei, the South Taiyangkow fort, the North Taiyangkow fort, and the Chair Hill forts. The distance to be advanced over by the Japanese troops was about a mile and a half, and there were two or three small entrenched hills on the way that had to be taken. This advance was immediately begun, and made steady and uninterrupted progress until the Ya-hu-thwei position was reached. In the meantime sapping had been commenced towards the Itzeshan fort of the Chair Hill group from 203 Metre Hill, in a south-easterly direction. It was an almost hopeless undertaking, for the ground was frozen hard, and even with the greatest labour little progress could be made.

A messenger from General Stoessel, who approached the Japanese lines upon the morning of the 16th with a white flag, delivered a written complaint addressed to General Nogi, that the Japanese artillery were bombarding the hospitals in the city, and asked that the areas which they occupied be exempted from fire. The answer returned to the complaint was that at no time since the beginning of the siege had the guns of the besieging army been ranged against hospital buildings in Port Arthur intentionally. The Red Cross flag was being flown from so many buildings in both the New and the Old Towns, some of them in immediate proximity to other buildings obviously used for military and naval purposes, that it was impossible to give assurances that stray shells might not hit one of these hospitals. The siege had lasted so long, and the artillery of the besieging army had been used so much, that the deviation of the fire from the guns was increasing, so that shells did not always hit the points aimed at. There were several conferences held, at which General Balachoff, the chief of the Red Cross in the besieged town, tried hard to induce the Japanese to exempt the hospital areas from gun-fire altogether; but only a conditional promise was given, that so long as buildings within the areas were used solely for hospital purposes, guns would not be ranged against them, but when hospitals were contiguous to buildings used for military or naval purposes, no guarantee could be given that stray shells might not hit them. After the fall of the fortress it was found that a Japanese shell did hit one of the largest hospitals, but the damage done was not great, and none of the

The Workshops of the Japanese Engineers, close to the Advance Trenches in front of the E. Urhlung Fort. Men worked here under both rifle and shell fire.

wounded in the building could possibly have been injured.

A little before midnight on the 20th the Japanese captured a semi-permanent gun emplacement between the North Keekwan fort and the "Q" battery position. Some twenty pieces of broken field guns were found. These guns were probably smashed by the fire of the howitzer battery placed upon the "P" entrenched hill. There were many bodies lying about the place, and a considerable quantity of accoutrements of various kinds. During the same night the naval guns kept up a heavy bombardment of the harbour, because it was found that the enemy's torpedo and other small craft were in the habit of entering the harbour at night to escape torpedo attacks from the fleet, and retiring again at daylight to anchorages under the Golden Hill forts outside, where the land batteries of the besieging army could not reach them. For several nights this fire was kept up in the hope of inflicting damage upon these vessels.

The difficult work of piercing mine shafts under the East Urhlung fort was completed on the 27th of December, and the mines laid ready for the explosion, which had been fixed for the following morning. The engineers and sappers had encountered great difficulties in piercing mine tunnels under this fort owing to the rocky nature of the hill. Two main shafts were first run under the fort walls for a distance of some fifty feet, from which there were three smaller branch tunnels. Five mines, comprising a total charge of about two tons of explosive,—dynamite and gun-cotton,—were safely laid. This fort was the largest, and had the strongest garrison of any of the guarding

forts upon this section of the eastern line of defence. It was expected that even if the explosion of the mines resulted successfully there would be a fierce struggle before the garrison was overpowered and the fort taken. Consequently, great precautions were taken that the assaults which were to follow should result successfully. The interior defences were arranged in what might be called two tiers, the second upon a slightly higher level than the first. Upon the lower level were several lines of infantry trenches and protected casemates for machine and automatic quick-firing guns, while upon the rear or higher level were the casemates for the guns of heavier calibre. In order to assist in the assault by bombarding the loopholes of these rear casemates from the east, a number of mountain guns were placed upon the west crest of the Hachimakiyama entrenched hill, so that fire could be opened as soon as the assaults commenced. A mountain gun and a number of machine guns were also taken up into the sapping trenches close to the fort, so that they might be used from the outer parapets if required to cover the advance of the assaulting parties into the interior of the fort. Before ten o'clock, the hour fixed for the explosion of the mines, the sapping trenches leading to the forthill were crowded with troops. It was arranged that there should be two storming parties of one battalion each from the nineteenth and thirty-sixth regiments of the eighteenth brigade of the ninth division, while two more battalions from the same regiments were held as reserves. They were splendid fighting regiments these, and had already distinguished themselves upon many occasions during the siege. The storming

parties had been carefully instructed, and the officers were determined that the fort should be taken at all hazards. From a spectacular point of view this was by all means the finest of the three explosions made under different guarding forts upon the eastern line of defence. The five mines were fired one after the other, with a few seconds' interval, so that the result to the spectator was the same as if they had all been fired together. The detonations were deafening, and a huge column of black smoke rose up over the fort several hundred feet into the air, while showers of rock and débris of all kinds descended upon every part of the forthill. Though it only lasted a few seconds the scene resembled the eruption of a volcano more than anything else. As the great cloud of smoke rolled away, it became evident that the result quite came up to expectations. The north and a portion of the east and west walls had been entirely wrecked, and the north section of the interior converted into a twisted, broken mass of ruins, but the rear sections remained partially intact. Although the heads of the sapping trenches, as well as the fort moat, had been filled with débris from the explosions, small assaulting parties made their way over the open ground to the ruined fort walls. They were met with a heavy rifle and machine-gun fire as soon as they reached the crest of the parapets, and practically annihilated. In the meantime the main bodies of the storming force gained the moat, and in five large detachments advanced towards the crest of the parapets. They were also met with a heavy fire, but taking cover in openings made by the explosions, they succeeded by three o'clock in the afternoon in securely

entrenching themselves upon the crest. All this time the Japanese siege batteries had been pouring a heavy shell fire into the rear sections of the broken fort, and the mountain guns upon Hachimakiyama had also kept up a steady bombardment with point-blank fire, across the narrow gorge between the two hills, at the casemates upon the east side of the fort. With great difficulty the mountain gun which had been brought up the sapping trenches early in the day was taken in sections to an emplacement prepared for it on the top of the parapet. Two or three machine guns were also mounted. Under cover of the direct fire of these guns a small assaulting party succeeded in gaining a foothold in the interior close to the machine-gun casemates, which were also carried with a splendid rush. This enabled the rest of the two battalions to push forward into the interior. Twice attempts were made to take the line of heavier guns without success, but finally about six o'clock the assaulters succeeded, and gained the concrete barracks in rear of the fort, from which the remnant of the garrison, about two hundred men, made good their escape through the windows in rear of the fort. It had been a hard fight at close quarters, principally with hand-grenades. The Russian garrison consisted of five hundred men from the East Siberian Sharpshooters and about one hundred marines from the warships. Nearly two hundred had been killed in the explosion and their bodies buried in the débris. About two hundred had been killed in the engagements which followed, and somewhere about two hundred more made good their escape. There were no prisoners taken except two or three wounded soldiers. The Japanese losses were about

one thousand killed and wounded. Before retiring from the barracks, the enemy sprinkled the woodwork with petroleum and set fire to it. This fire burned all night and part of the following day. The guns taken in the captured fort were—four 12 and 15 centimetre, seven automatic quick-firers mounted in the fort, thirty-seven in the gorge in rear, and two machine guns.

Just before dawn the following morning a large party of the enemy made a desperate counter-attack with the object of recapturing the fort. It was doubtless their intention to take the troops holding it by surprise, but ground scouts had been posted upon the farther side of the moat, and they gave timely warning. In spite of the heavy rifle fire poured into them, two small bodies of the enemy succeeded in reaching the moat in rear of the fort in an endeavour to gain an entrance, but they were repulsed with considerable loss. Two other attempts followed, but they were easily thwarted, as the force holding the place had in the meantime been strongly reinforced. Daylight on the morning of the 29th saw the Japanese securely entrenched in the ruins of the second of the captured guarding forts.

About this time the naval guns and the big howitzers were searching every part of the city, and destroying arsenals, provision depots, workshops, and magazines of all kinds. A high-explosive shell from one of the naval guns struck an ammunition factory situated near the dockyards in the Old Town about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th. There was a heavy explosion, and for hours afterwards dense volumes of black smoke indicated that a very considerable

fire had been started. This was practically the last of the buildings used for military purposes in the city to be destroyed by shell fire.

During these last days some very pathetic incidents happened in the front trenches of the opposing forces, which by this time were only a few yards apart. On the afternoon of the 16th a Japanese soldier in one of the advance trenches under the Chinese Wall upon the rear slopes of the Hachimakiyama entrenched hill picked up two small pieces of paper wrapped around a ten-rouble gold piece which had been thrown from behind the Chinese Wall. The soldier at once took the papers and money to his officer, who was unable to read what was written because it was in Russian. Upon examination at head-quarters it was found that one of the papers was addressed to the Japanese officer in command of the trench-line at the place where the papers were found. They had always been honourable enemies, the message stated, and therefore he had no hesitation in asking for a great favour. He had an aged mother living in the Crimea, who had not heard from him since the siege commenced, and he was afraid that this long silence on his part might result in her death. Night after night he had been unable to sleep because of anxiety on this score. He was sending a message informing his mother that he was alive and well, and with it ten roubles to pay for the cost of sending it. The letter ended with a pathetic request that the message should be sent from the Japanese lines, and the signature was that of the Russian officer in command of the enemy's trench-line at that point. This request touched the hearts

of the Japanese officers, for it was well known that the Russian officer who had made it had over and over again recklessly risked his life in daring attempts to prevent the irresistible progress of the sapping trenches towards those where his command was stationed. The cablegram was sent to Yinkow, and from there transmitted to Russia. The following day the Japanese officer to whom this strange request had been made sent back a message, written in Russian, to his friend the enemy in the opposite trench, that he was pleased to inform him he had secured permission of the authorities to despatch his message and had done so. After that many similar messages were thrown over into the Japanese trenches from both officers and men for transmission to their relatives in Russia. Although not a few from the Russian rank and file were written upon post-cards taken from the dead bodies of Japanese soldiers, these messages were invariably censored at headquarters and transmitted to their destination. In nearly all cases the postage upon letters and the cost of cablegrams was paid by the Japanese authorities. This incident is mentioned to show that, although the fighting almost from the very first days of the siege until the last was marked with unexampled ferocity on both sides, there was on the side of the Japanese a very cordial respect entertained for the enemy who had put up such a splendid defence. This was remarkable in view of the fact that during the whole siege there were only one or two instances of men surrendering, that in nearly all cases the struggle had been absolutely to the death, quarter being neither asked nor offered on either side. More than that, there had

been most flagrant breaches of the rules which are supposed to govern all civilized warfare, such as the deliberate shooting of wounded and the firing upon Red Cross. All this had engendered ferocity, and a refusal to ask or grant quarter when the fighting was on; but the way in which these requests were treated before, and the wonderful manner in which the opposing troops fraternized after, the capitulation, showed that the respect for personal courage on both sides outweighed all other considerations.

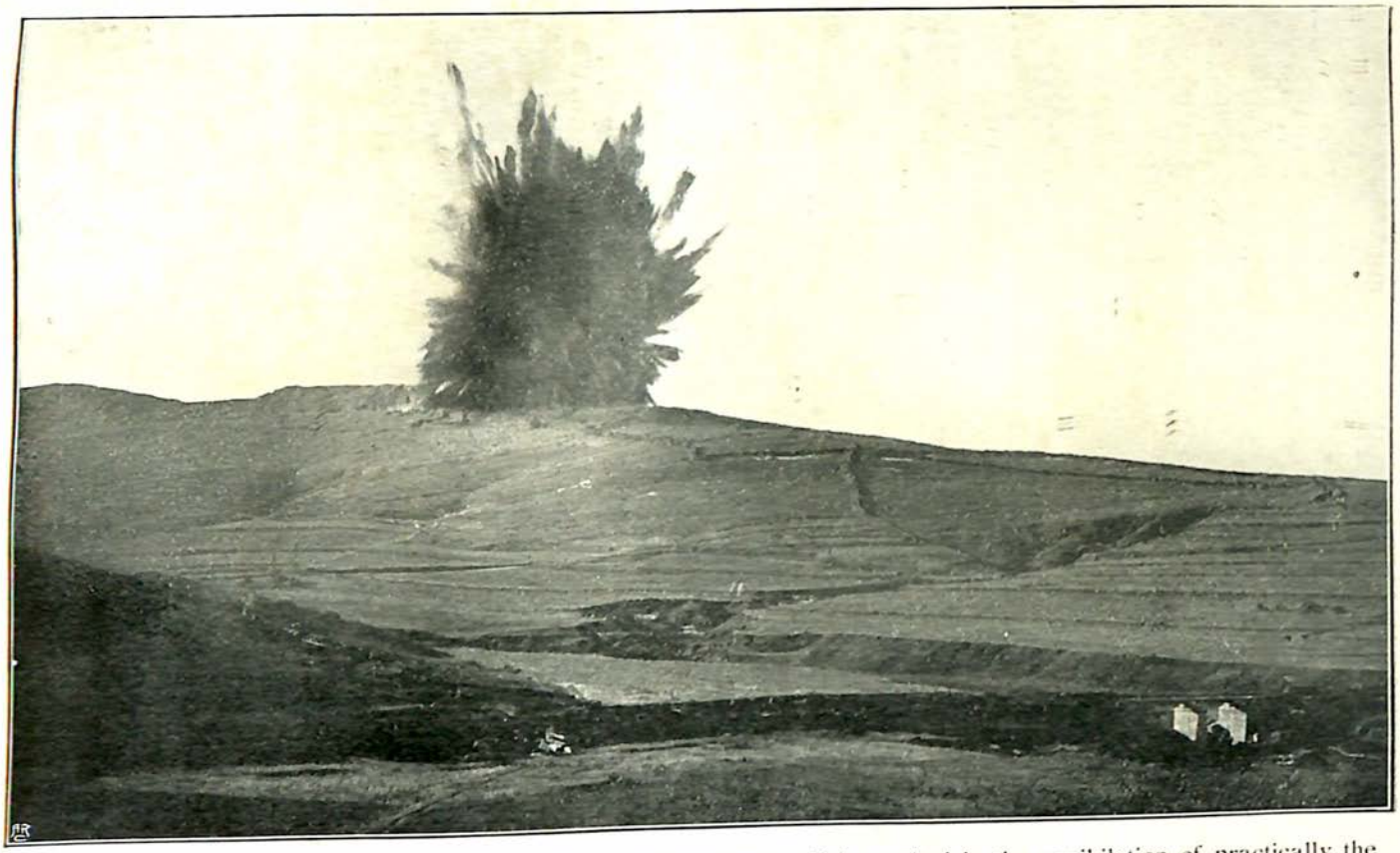
CHAPTER XXVII

The explosion of the mines under the West Urhlung fort, and the practical annihilation of the garrison—The capture of the remainder imprisoned in the broken fort—The piercing of the enceinte and the capture of a portion of the ridge in rear—The last fight of the siege on Wantai Hill—The occupation of the heights at Ya-hu-thwei—The offer of General Stoessel to surrender—The destruction of the sunken warships in the harbour, and the burning of the regimental colours—The escape of the torpedo destroyers to Chefoo.

THE Japanese plans with regard to the enemy's line of defence east of the city had now progressed to such an extent that only one guarding fort remained to be captured upon the section of the line from the big East Keekwan Hill westward. At two points the sapping trenches of the besieging army were within a few yards of the enceinte to the ridge in rear where the main battery positions were located, on the higher slopes of Hachimakiyama entrenched hill, and in rear of the East Panlung fort. At both points the Chinese Wall had been mined in order to make breaches at the proper moment to admit assaulting parties. Simultaneously with the capture of the last guarding fort, the plan involved the piercing of the enceinte at these two points, and an assault in force with the object of either carrying the ridge in rear, or obtaining a foothold upon it. It did not follow, by any means, that the plan would succeed; and even if a foothold was gained, that did not mean the immediate capture of the ridge.

During the attack in August, and again at the last general assault, the enceinte had been successfully pierced, but the assaulters had been quite unable to gain even a foothold upon the heights in rear. Up till this time the defence had been well maintained, though it had visibly weakened since the capture of 203 Metre Hill and the death of General Kondrachenko. Still, there was absolutely nothing to indicate that the end was near. And yet it was not only near, but actually at hand, for the day after the West Urhlung fort had been blown up and its garrison partly annihilated and partly taken prisoners, General Stoessel made his offer to surrender.

The task of mining the West Urhlung fort had been an exceedingly difficult one. Two main shafts were started from the moat under the north walls, but they had not gone far before it became evident that the enemy was countermining. Time and time again the direction of the shafts had to be altered to avoid coming in contact with the tunnels of the garrison. The work was finally completed on the afternoon of the 30th and the mines duly placed. It was announced that the explosions would take place the following morning at ten o'clock. Two assaulting columns of one battalion each from the troops of the first division were to be in readiness to attack immediately after the explosions. Punctually to the minute the mines were fired one after another with an interval of a few seconds. There was a repetition of the scenes which had attended the blowing up of the other forts. The same huge column of black smoke and earth rose up towards the heavens, filled with the same terrible eruption



The blowing up of the West Urhlung Fort with dynamite mines, which resulted in the annihilation of practically the entire garrison.

of débris. Before the pall of smoke had even begun to roll away, there was another roaring detonation apparently from the very centre of the fort. This explosion had certainly not been on the programme, and it was too far from the north wall to be caused by a Japanese mine. Afterwards it was learned that the shock of the first explosions had been communicated to the magazines, which had thus been set off. The men of one assaulting column swarmed up the north parapets and disappeared in the interior apparently unopposed, except for a heavy shell fire from the Chair Hill forts across the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. The second column made its way to the gorge in rear of the fort. But all the precautions taken were quite needless, there was no garrison left to fight. Two hundred and fifty of them had been killed and buried in the débris of the awful double explosion, and the remainder, one hundred and fifty-six rank and file with three officers, had been entombed in the ruined concrete casemates. When the Japanese troops swarmed into the fort they put a white flag through one of the loopholes in the casemates and surrendered. Sappers were brought up, and by means of dynamite an opening was made in their prison, through which the scanty remnant of a garrison of four hundred officers and men were marched out in twos and threes and taken prisoners of war to the Japanese lines. Not a man of the garrison escaped. The fort was a terrible sight. Nothing was left intact. Guns were smashed to splinters, and heavy concrete was rent into a thousand fragments. A pile of ruins only stood where the fort had been,

and underneath were the remains of two hundred and fifty officers and men.

The last of the guarding forts being thus taken practically without a fight, the assaulting columns advanced from the gorge in rear and attempted to occupy the ridge beyond. They came under a heavy rifle fire from the Chinese Wall and from the supporting fort of West Urhlung, which lay directly south of the captured fort upon the extreme western end of the ridge in rear of the line of guarding forts and the Chinese Wall, and which at that point is about the same height as the forthill upon which the West Urhlung fort was located. Though little progress was made in this advance, the troops of the ninth division upon the rear slopes of Hachimakiyama entrenched hill, next east in the line from the East Urhlung fort, and those in the advance trenches close to the Chinese Wall in rear of the East Panlung fort, succeeded by exploding mines under the Chinese Wall in making breaches at both points about six o'clock in the evening, through which assaulting parties managed to make their way and establish a firm foothold. The enceinte at these two points had been pierced during the general assault of the 26th of November, but upon that occasion the enemy had massed reserves and machine guns upon the ridge in rear, and had forced the assaulters to retire. This time, though the troops holding the Chinese Wall fought to the very last, no determined effort was made by the Russians to resist the advance towards the crest of the ridge. Slowly the garrison behind the Chinese Wall in the section between the two points where breaches had been made were forced to retire, and the dawn of New Year's

day saw the Japanese in possession of the "H" and New Panlung battery positions, and the entire crest of the ridge from Wantai, west to a point close to the supporting fort of West Urh-lung at its western extremity. This was a wholly unexpected result from the night's fighting, and in order that they should not be robbed of the fruits of their efforts this time, the troops of the besieging army worked with almost superhuman energy to so entrench themselves upon the captured heights that they could not be dislodged by any counter-attack made by the enemy.

Encouraged by the success which had attended the efforts of their comrades-in-arms in gaining a foothold inside the enemy's line of defence east of the city, the troops of the first and seventh divisions in front of the Ya-hu-thwei position, upon the west flank, furiously attacked the enemy upon the heights at that point about eight o'clock on New Year's morning, under cover of a heavy bombardment from the field artillery, which had been pushed forward to within easy range. The garrison fought well, but the defence lacked determination, and was more or less half-hearted. By two o'clock in the afternoon the position had been captured, and the way opened to an advance towards the outskirts of the New Town. The capture of the Ya-hu-thwei position, in addition to opening the way for an advance towards the city, also broke the Russian line of communications between the Tiger's Tail and Lao-tieh-shan groups of forts and those upon the Chair Hills. It also enabled the Japanese to control the approaches from both these groups of forts to the city. Without in any way desiring to

detract from the credit due the troops of the besieging army for the capture of this enormously important position, it is inconceivable that the attack could have been successful had the defending troops been reinforced as they might have been, and had the garrison not been convinced that the whole game was practically over.

Two strong assaulting columns, one from the ninth and the other from the eleventh divisions, massed for attack about the base of Wantai shortly after nine o'clock on New Year's morning. The advance up the steep slopes of this hill, which had cost so many lives in August, was preceded by a tremendously heavy bombardment from the siege train and the divisional artillery. The fight was a splendid one to see, for from the time the advance began the assaulters were in plain view in their dark uniforms and glittering bayonets showing up against the lighter background of the steep hill-slope. Like swarms of ants the two black bodies of men worked slowly upwards in the direction of the battery position upon the crest, which all the time resembled the crater of an active volcano from the bursting of shrapnel and heavier shells. Many wonderful sights this siege had afforded, but this last scene in the last act of the great drama was more fascinating than anything which had preceded it. Hundreds of officers and men had died in vain efforts to reach that lofty crest in August. More had fallen in every subsequent attack. Wantai meant Port Arthur to the besieging army. It had always, from the first days of the siege, beckoned them on until now, only to death and defeat. For five long, weary, bloody months the army had cast longing

eyes upon the fatal crest which had cost so much because its capture meant so much. Now the supreme moment had come. Wantai was within reach. The very manner in which those Japanese soldiers wormed their way, inch by inch, towards the crest, dying as they crawled, told one that if all other attacks had failed, were almost bound to fail, this one was just as sure to succeed. Nothing short of absolute annihilation could have stopped those men then in their slow upward climb, for the end, the very last of the awful siege, lay at the top. And when it did come it was superb, that end. Only a short twenty yards separated the top of the nearest column from their goal. It was about half-past three o'clock, and half an hour was spent in the exchange of dynamite grenades. Suddenly a Japanese officer rose from his crawling attitude, waved his sword high in the air, and made straight for the crest. He was followed by twenty or thirty men. With "Banzais!" that could be heard for miles, these crawling hundreds rose to their feet and went to the crest like a whirlwind. There was a loud explosion. The enemy in retiring had fired a mine under the battery position, but it happened too soon to do any serious damage. Nor did it stop the assaulters for a second. Through the smoke and dust they went, and Wantai was theirs at long last. It was a wonderful scene this last in the drama, for it meant so much. A whole army was anxiously watching the progress of this last attack. Men in hundreds, with drawn, anxious faces scarcely breathed, lest some awful disaster should again rob them of the possession of that hill; and when the end did come, and the

flag of the Rising Sun was planted high above the topmost heights of Wantai, cheers went up from watching thousands in the valley below such as a man hears but once in a lifetime, and then only if he is fortunate.

Just one hour after Wantai had been won, a solitary officer preceded by a Cossack orderly bearing a large white flag, rode out from Port Arthur, and approached the Japanese advance trenches in the gorge of the Shuishi Valley south of the village of Shuishi. When about five hundred yards distant, the orderly blew a blast upon his trumpet, and a Japanese officer stepped quickly from cover and advanced to meet the messenger from the enemy. He carried a sealed letter from General Stoessel addressed to General Baron Nogi, in which the commander of the Russian garrison said: "Judging from the general situation within the area of fighting, I think that further resistance is needless. In order therefore to avoid further loss of life, I ask you to negotiate for the terms of surrender. Should you accept my proposal, you will appoint a commissioner in order to discuss the terms and process of surrender, and fix a place of meeting between your commissioner and ours." The Russian messenger intimated the nature of the contents of this letter to the Japanese officer who had met him, and immediately the news was transmitted to Army Headquarters by telephone. General Nogi was at once informed, and a message was telegraphed to Tokyo apprizing the Emperor of Japan that his troops had gained the enemy's stronghold at Port Arthur. The good news was kept an absolute secret by the Headquarters Staff until the following

The Crest of Wangtai Hill, showing the condition of the Russian Trench Lines after Capture.

morning, when the divisional commanders and the army generally were informed of what had taken place.

Shortly after midnight several heavy explosions occurred upon the crest of the big East Keekwan Hill. They were followed by a heavy rifle fire from the Russian trenches on and about the hill. The firing lasted for half an hour or more, and then suddenly ceased. Scouts were sent out from the Japanese trenches to find out what it all meant. They returned in a few minutes with the report that the enemy's trenches had been evacuated. This proved to be the case. The "Q" battery position, the Chinese Wall in the gorge west of the East Keekwan Hill, and the trench-lines upon the hill itself were all deserted. They were at once occupied, and further investigation showed that the enemy had exploded mines under the battery positions upon the crest of the East Keekwan Hill and completely wrecked them. Before retiring, the Russian soldiers had fired off all the rifle ammunition they had in their pouches. When morning dawned the Japanese held the entire ridge from the crest of the East Keekwan Hill to the western extremity, with the exception of the supporting fort of West Urhlung, which was still in the possession of the enemy.

This New Year's night was a busy one inside Port Arthur. It had been pretty generally known for some time previous that General Stoessel was preparing to surrender. Even the soldiers of the garrison got to know that such was the intention through the soldier-servants attached to the household of the Commander-in-Chief. Though there were other reasons as well, there can be no doubt

this report took the heart out of the defence from the moment it became known among the rank and file of the garrison. A council of war was summoned by General Stoessel upon the 29th of December, after the East Urhlung fort had been blown up and captured, which was attended by some twenty-two of the officers of highest rank in the Army and the Navy. It was at this meeting that General Stoessel announced his intention of surrendering the fortress, and gave the reasons why he had arrived at this conclusion. The decision, according to statements made by several officers in both the Army and the Navy who were present, was not acquiesced in by a majority of the officers present. On the contrary, only three out of the whole number, two of them staff officers, supported the view of the Commander-in-Chief, and, if all reports are correct, many unpleasant things were said before the meeting was terminated by General Stoessel making the announcement that he would act as he felt it his duty to act, and take full personal responsibility for what was done. In an official report to the Czar bearing the same date he intimated that he would take measures to prevent carnage in the streets of Port Arthur. The capture of the West Urhlung fort, with the annihilation and capture of its entire garrison on the 31st, together with the success of the Japanese troops in securing a firm foothold upon the crest of the ridge immediately north of the city, seems to have decided Stoessel to act at once, and he sent the proposal to surrender to General Nogi the following day. But, according to statements made after the surrender, it appears that no general intimation was given, even to the higher officers who had attended the meeting

of the council of war a few days previously, until the letter addressed to General Nogi had been, or was about to be, delivered. Though he had full power to act as he did, very many of both the military and naval officers in Port Arthur maintained that, not only was a successful resistance made impossible by General Stoessel allowing it to become known that he intended to surrender long before he was prepared to take the responsibility of doing so, but that in acting without first giving sufficient notice of his intention, he made it an exceedingly difficult matter to destroy the warships and fortress artillery so that they could not be utilized by the successful enemy, and get the craft which was yet afloat off to a neutral port. When the Admiral of the fleet learned that a proposal to surrender had been made, or was about to be made immediately, there remained much for him to do before negotiations were commenced. The larger warships had all been sunk in the harbour by the enemy's artillery fire, but they had still to be destroyed, so that their further usefulness would be gone. A number of torpedoes were exploded in the engine-rooms and shaft-tunnels of the sunken warships, with the object of making it impossible for the Japanese to raise and repair them. The gunboat *Otvazny* was also torpedoed and sunk in deep water. Five torpedo craft and the fast yacht, the *Arinitoi*, which had formerly been used by Viceroy Alexieff, with some other smaller craft, left the harbour under cover of darkness, intending to run the blockade and make the German port of Kiaochao on the China coast. The torpedo-boat destroyers *Parastsny*, *Stratni*, *Skory*, and *Serdity*, with the

yacht *Arinitoi*, reached the harbour at Chefoo the following day, pursued by a Japanese cruiser and four torpedo-boat destroyers. The small torpedo boat *Retvezan*, which belonged to the battleship of the same name, arrived on the afternoon of the 3rd of January. All the vessels were disarmed by the Chinese authorities and detained.

There was still another last duty to be performed before the garrison entered upon the ordeal of surrender. The colours of the various regiments, nearly all of which had been conferred with great ceremony by the Czar, had to be destroyed so that they might not fall into the hands of the victorious enemy. During the dead of night, in one of the principal public squares in the New Town, the ceremony was performed. A guard of troops were drawn up, a fire was kindled in the centre, and officers from the various regiments brought their colours, and after a most impressive religious service consigned them to the flames.

A pathetic report was sent to the Czar by General Stoessel, which bore the date January 1st. It was taken to Chefoo by the torpedo-boat destroyers which escaped that night, and was transmitted from there to Russia. It read: "Now there are ten thousand men under arms, and they are all ill. Yesterday there was a terrific mine explosion under the 3rd fort (West Urhlung). Subsequently the enemy began a general bombardment, and a portion of our garrison was annihilated, while the rest retreated. After bombarding for two hours, the enemy charged the Chinese Wall. The attack was repulsed twice, but finally we were compelled to give way, and at night retired to

the heights in rear. This new position cannot be retained for a long time. Should these places fall into the enemy's hands, we cannot but capitulate. We beg herewith for Your Majesty's pardon. We have done all that human power can do. I beseech Your Majesty to take pity on us and sympathize with our position. The unceasing fighting for the past eleven months has exhausted our energies."

CHAPTER XXVIII

The reply of General Nogi to the offer of surrender—Instructions from the Mikado regarding the treatment of General Stoessel—The formal announcement of the fall of Port Arthur—A trip to the village of Shuishi, and the meeting of the Commissioners in Plumb-tree Cottage to decide and sign terms of capitulation—The effect of the good news upon the Japanese troops—The scene in camp during the night—The forthills fringed with bonfires—Visit of Captain Tsunoda to General Stoessel, to acquaint him with the Mikado's instructions and propose a meeting with General Nogi—The Russian General's frank talk—General Stoessel's message to the Czar, and the reply—The meeting of the two Generals, and what took place.

SHORTLY after dawn on the morning of the second day of the new year, a Japanese officer, accompanied by a couple of orderlies, rode out from the advance trenches of the besieging army towards the enemy's lines in the gorge of the Shuishi Valley, and delivered to the Russian officer who advanced to meet him the answer of General Nogi to the proposal of surrender. It was courteous, but brief and businesslike in its tone, approved of the proposal, appointed Major-General Ijichi, his Chief of Staff, as Commissioner for the besieging army, named the village of Shuishi as the place, and noon of that day the hour for the conference. The note also stipulated that both Commissioners should have full power to decide the terms of capitulation, and that they should become operative at once as soon as signed without waiting for ratification. At eight o'clock the same morning, General Nogi

received instructions from His Majesty the Emperor of Japan to accord all the honours of war to General Stoessel, as a mark of the Imperial appreciation for the faithful manner in which he had served his fatherland.

All these things had happened without anyone outside the Headquarters Staff knowing anything about them. Some of the troops in the front lines may have surmised that the end had arrived, but the Army generally was still in ignorance. Daylight of the 2nd came with a strangely oppressive silence. For the first time in five months the sun had risen over Port Arthur without being accompanied by the sound of artillery and the popping of rifles. Late the previous afternoon we had seen Wantai taken; during the night there had been the usual complement of sound. But this silence which came with the dawn, what did it mean? It got upon the nerves of those who had lived for nearly half a year amid the medley of sounds which day and night had become familiar. Was this weird, unnatural silence the precursor of some Russian plan which would end in another tragedy upon the fatal slopes of Wantai? Or—strange that the truth should suggest itself, for no one expected it—was it the end? Hurriedly we made our ways to Headquarters. The staff officer who had for months acted as press censor made his appearance. There was no hint to be gathered from his manner that anything in the nature of the end had happened. He was absolutely calm and unruffled, told us what had happened upon the extreme west flank the previous afternoon, gave us all the details regarding the capture of Wantai, and then, without even an appearance

of exultation, looked over the little group as if to study the effect his words had, and in an even tone pronounced the four words, "Port Arthur has fallen." No one believed him at first. The manner in which the thing was done was quite too cold-blooded, for we knew what that announcement meant to every Japanese. But it was true, and that was the reason for the strange silence which had been oppressing us. Port Arthur had surrendered, and there was a virtual suspension of hostilities. Could we see General Nogi in order to offer him our congratulations? The officer would see. Almost immediately the man who had been responsible for the capture of the great Russian fortress appeared among us. It was plain he was striving to hide the great joy and relief the news had brought to him, but he could not do it. In appearance even he looked twenty years younger than he did when we had talked with him the previous day, for then he fully expected another month of hard fighting at the least. He received our congratulations with quiet dignity; and with that same kindliness which had always marked his conduct he turned to the staff officer and said in Japanese, "Tell them everything." So, in compliance with the General's orders, we were told in detail all that had occurred, and informed that the Commissioners would meet that day at noon in the village of Shuishi to decide and sign the terms of capitulation.

The great and good news that Port Arthur had fallen was only beginning to become known to the rank and file of the Army when we started from Headquarters to make our ways to the village of Shuishi, where the meeting of the Commissioners

was to take place. From the crest of the Feng-hoang-shan range, which we had to cross, the whole length of the fortridge east of the city was visible. We had seen those mounds of earth in many moods during the siege. Often they had stood out grim and silent, pregnant with hidden power and energy. Times without number they had been subjected to avalanches of bursting shells, which had made their crests seethe and boil like the craters of active volcanoes. But in all moods they had seemed to be deserted, and one only became conscious of the presence in them of thousands of soldiers when the opposing army hurled itself against their brown slopes, only to be thrown back broken and repulsed. Now their terrible power had ceased to be operative, and upon their battered slopes and torn crests thousands of soldiers strolled idly about. The scene did not look natural. It appealed to one, in the sense of an insult to the power and terrible majesty with which those hills were associated that anyone should dare to desecrate them thus. Involuntarily we had come to respect their hidden power, and it seemed that the desecraters must surely pay the same price that so many thousands had already paid for refusing to respect that power. But all that had passed now, and the curious Japanese soldiers, instead of celebrating the bloodless victory which had just been won, were wandering over the slopes and crests they had so determinedly tried to reach for so many months. Many times we had made the trip to Shuishi before, but always under the cover of the trench-lines, conscious all the time that some one of the hundreds of shells which were being sent from the enemy's

position might suddenly terminate everything, so far as we were concerned. It was a strange sensation to feel that we could now walk with impunity where two days before no man dared walk, or even show himself. We took a short-cut past the ruined Urhlung redoubt. Every yard of the ground was strewn with pieces of exploded shells, but the face of the valley at this point was strewn with other things infinitely more pathetic. Every now and then we came across khaki uniforms with disintegrating bones protruding from them. There they were, as they had fallen in the months of August and September previous—all that remained of soldiers who had taken part in attacks upon the redoubt. The sanitary corps had missed them in the thousands that had to be gathered. It was gruesome, of course, but it was part of the great tragedy. Shuishi had once been a prosperous Chinese town, located about a mile from Port Arthur on the main road just at the entrance to the gorge between the forthills east and west of the city. It had, however, been destroyed by the enemy when the investing lines of the Japanese Army were drawn about the fortress position. Subsequently the blackened walls of its stone houses had been levelled to the earth by shell fire, and its streets excavated into trench-lines. Upon the western outskirts there was a small Chinese house which seemed to have borne a charmed life. In the midst of all the destruction it had remained intact, the only habitable abode in this large town. Latterly the place had been used by the Japanese as a field hospital, but it had been hastily got ready for the meeting of the Commissioners. The place was called Plumbtree

Plumbtree Cottage.

Cottage, after its owner, a filthy old Chinaman who, the Japanese soldiers averred, had refused at any time during the siege to leave the abode of his fathers. When rifle and shell fire had become too hot for him above ground, he took refuge in the cellar, and hibernated there until the storm of lead and iron abated sufficiently for him to reappear.

It was a little after noon when Major-General Ijichi, accompanied by several staff officers, rode through the village of Shuishi towards the advance lines of the two armies, to receive the Russian Commissioner. Major-General Reiss, Chief of Staff to General Stoessel, was his Commissioner, and he had with him two or three staff officers. The meeting took place in the space between the two trench-lines, and the whole cavalcade rode back to Plumbtree Cottage, over the entrance to the compound of which someone had pasted a strip of white paper upon which was written the words "The way to peace" in Chinese characters. Major-General Ijichi presented the Russian Commissioner with a document written in English containing the terms of capitulation. All the negotiations were conducted in the same language. The document provided that the military and naval forces of Russia in the fortress and the harbour, as well as volunteers and officials, should become prisoners of war, and for the handing over of the fortress and the vessels of the Navy intact. It stipulated that by noon upon the following day all garrisons in the Itzeshan, An-tzu-shan, and other forts and fortifications upon the western side of the city, should be withdrawn, and the forts and fortifications handed over to the Japanese

Army. Any attempt to destroy or alter existing conditions in or about the fortress after the signing of the terms of capitulation would invalidate them. Maps should be made showing the arrangements of the defences, the position of mines and torpedoes, and lists made of the organization of the naval and military forces, with all details. The number, nationality, and avocations of the non-combatant population should be given. All arms, ammunition, and war material should be left in its present position. Military and naval officers would be permitted to retain their swords and all privately owned articles, and such officers as gave a solemn pledge in writing not to take further part in the war would be allowed to return to Russia under parole, and each such officer would be allowed one soldier orderly who would be similarly pledged. The disarmed troops, including the navy and volunteers, were to be marched out of the city and fortress at times and to places indicated. The officials of the sanitary and paymasters' departments were to continue in the discharge of their duties as long as the Japanese Army deemed it necessary for ministering and affording sustenance to sick and wounded prisoners. A supplementary document provided for the actual taking over of everything in the fortress and the harbour, for the assembling, disarming, and removal of the prisoners. It also stipulated that all private individuals in Port Arthur would be free to pursue their avocations, or remove with all their private property by roads designated by the Japanese Army.

One hour was allowed the Russian Commissioner to consider the documents. Major-General

Reiss asked if the terms were absolute. The Japanese Commissioner replied that they were final, but that he would be glad to hear any suggestions. In due course the conference was renewed, when the Russian Commissioner made several proposals. He asked that the soldiers and sailors might be allowed to return to Russia; that the horses in Port Arthur should not be handed over; that every officer should be allowed one orderly; that the buildings of the Red Cross Society should remain the property of the Society; that a telegram might be sent to the Czar asking permission for the officers to accept parole, and that a certain amount of personal baggage should be permitted each officer. The battleships and cruisers, he said, had been destroyed, and the regimental colours had been burned, so that none of these could be surrendered. General Ijichi replied that soldiers and sailors must be treated as prisoners of war; that horses must be handed over; that each officer would be allowed one orderly; that the buildings of the Red Cross Society would remain untouched, and that a telegram would be sent to the Czar, provided it was written in English; that officers would be allowed to take with them personal baggage equal in amount to that of a Japanese officer of the same rank.

While these points were under discussion a message arrived by telephone from General Nogi's Headquarters, to the effect that a serious fire had broken out in Port Arthur, and that some deserters from the forts had passed beyond the Russian lines. General Ijichi warmly protested against such conduct, and threatened to break

off negotiations if there was any further attempt at destruction of property in Port Arthur. A letter was accordingly despatched to General Stoessel, and assurances received that no further incendiarism would occur. At half-past four o'clock the draft of the terms was signed, and messages were despatched to the two commanders asking for a formal suspension of hostilities. The delegates then dined together, and at half-past nine o'clock the copies of the documents, in Japanese and Russian, were signed and exchanged, and Port Arthur passed out of Russian control.

Night had fallen when we started on our return from Shuishi. When the good news had come to them first, the troops of the victorious army acted as if a great burden had been lifted from them. The dominant note was relief more than exultation. Their curiosity to see and examine those dust-brown forthills, that had proved so hard to take, kept them occupied until night came. Then the full measure of all this surrender meant to them began to dawn. All night long bonfires blazed in every part of the great camp, and in his quiet, orderly way the Japanese soldier gave full vent to his feeling of relief and gladness. It was a wonderful sight that night from the crest of Feng-hoang-shan. In rear every camp was a blaze of light; in front the entire fort-line from East Keekwan to West Urhlung was fringed with fire. Hundreds of bonfires there were, and around them Japanese soldiers drank vodka and Russian soldiers saké, as the pledge of a friendship born of mutual respect for each other's qualities of personal courage. The Russian soldier, though he would have been content to fight longer, was

unfeignedly glad the whole business was over, and ready to make friends with "the little devils who had fought so well." The Japanese soldier was also glad the struggle was over, but in a deeper sense, for he could not have been glad had he been in the Russian soldier's place. While he was willing to make friends with a brave enemy, he marvelled that so many soldiers could survive defeat. Had his army been so beaten, there would have been few soldiers and no officers left, and those who would have surrendered could not have gone back to their homes in Japan. They were both brave, those soldiers who fraternized that night upon the crests of the battered and broken forthills, but their standards were different—that was all. What the one had done, the other dared not do, even if he would.

During the morning of the 2nd, before the meeting of the Commissioners, General Nogi sent Captain Tsunoda, one of his staff officers, into Port Arthur, to call upon General Stoessel, acquaint him with the wish expressed by the Mikado that he should be accorded all the honours of war, and make arrangements for a meeting, which took place two days after, in Plumbtree Cottage, in the village of Shuishi. During this visit General Stoessel talked very frankly. He deeply appreciated the kindness of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, especially for permitting himself and his officers to retain their swords. His first enquiry was as to the whereabouts of General Kuropatkin. He had received assurances from him on the 6th of October that Port Arthur would soon be relieved. About the end of the same month another message had come from him saying

that he had made the attempt and failed. His Chinese spies, however, assured him that General Kuropatkin was close to Kinchow, on his way southward. When informed of the defeat of the Russian Commander-in-Chief he expressed no surprise, and when told that the Baltic fleet had not then passed the Cape of Good Hope he looked grave, and remarked, "Now that Port Arthur has fallen, it is useless for the Baltic fleet to come farther." Speaking about the causes which led up to the war, he emphatically denied that Viceroy Alexieff had been in favour of inviting hostilities with Japan. The Viceroy and himself had both been in China during the Boxer trouble, and knew the fighting capabilities of the Japanese. The real cause, in his opinion, was the ignorance of the Russian people on that very subject. He had never wished to remain in Port Arthur, had several times asked permission to take command of his division in the North, but had been refused. When war began, the fortress of Port Arthur was in a wholly incomplete state, and the Japanese Army might have walked in at the time they made their naval attack in front of the harbour in February, as the garrison at that time numbered only some two or three thousand. He had always opposed the plan of General Sakaroff, of building up Dalny before the fortifications at Port Arthur were completed, but Sakaroff had died during the siege. He praised highly the pluck and patience of the Japanese soldiers. Their artillery he had not considered good at first, though he had since recognized its excellence, especially in concentrated fire. The shells of the 11-inch howitzers had played havoc with the defence. From the time

those guns arrived the Russian defensive works had been literally pounded to pieces. Personally he had served the Czar in three wars, and had three times been wounded. He felt he had done his duty, and trusted he would now be allowed to retire to private life."'

Immediately after the signing of the terms of capitulation, a telegram from General Stoessel, addressed to the Czar, was forwarded by the Japanese authorities. It read: "I have been forced to sign a capitulation concerning the surrender of Port Arthur. The officers and civil functionaries are allowed to wear arms and return to Russia under obligation not to take part in the present war, but should they refuse to subscribe to the obligation they are to remain prisoners of war. I apply to Your Majesty for permission to grant the obligation demanded." The following day an answer was received from the Czar in the terms: "I allow each officer the privilege reserved to him, either to return to Russia under obligation not to take part in the present war, or to share the destiny of the men. I thank you and the brave garrison for a brilliant defence."

As previously arranged, the meeting of the Commanders-in-Chief of the two armies took place upon the morning of the 5th in the village of Shuishi. Owing to the difference of an hour in the official times inside and outside Port Arthur, General Stoessel, attended by two or three staff officers, was the first to arrive at the rendezvous. About a quarter of an hour after, General Nogi put in an appearance attended by his Chief of Staff and several staff officers. The meeting took place in one of the small rooms of the cottage,

which up till a few days previous had been used as the operating room of one of the field hospitals of the first division of the Japanese Army. When General Nogi entered the room, General Stoessel at once rose to his feet, and the leaders of the rival armies looked into each other's eyes for the first time. The Commander-in-Chief of the victorious besieging army expressed his pleasure at meeting the Commander of the army which had made such a brave and gallant defence. Mutual interchange of complimentary references to the fighting qualities of their respective armies over, the Russian Commander referred to the great loss which had come to General Nogi in the death of his two sons. True to the custom of his country and his class, General Nogi smilingly replied, that his eldest son had been killed at the battle of Nanshan and the youngest during the fighting at 203 Metre Hill. He was glad their deaths had been worthy of warriors. Born of a military family, they must have been content with the glorious fate that befell them on the battlefield. At this reply, General Stoessel was obviously both amazed and impressed, for he immediately replied, " You are a great man. You think nothing of the greatest loss that can come to a father, but are satisfied at the worthy fate that has overtaken your two sons. We can hardly hope to imitate you." After further conversation, the Russian General expressed a desire to present General Nogi with one of his chargers as a souvenir of the occasion. Though he could not accept directly, owing to the fact that everything taken in Port Arthur as spoils of war was the property of the Emperor of Japan, General Nogi said

that if the horse was handed over to the Japanese Commissioner he would see that the animal was properly cared for. The Russian commander seemed hurt at this reply, and at once remarked that no matter how the transfer might be made he would be pleased to know that the animal ultimately fell into General Nogi's hands. There were many graves of fallen Russian soldiers scattered over the country between Nanshan and Port Arthur, and General Nogi offered to have these remains gathered together and reinterred in one place, so that a suitable memorial might be erected over the spot. This suggestion seemed to please the Russian General, who also intimated that the remains of General Kondrachenko and seven other officers killed at the same time had been interred at the foot of Wantai Hill. He trusted this grave might not be disturbed, to which request General Nogi immediately acquiesced. After an impromptu tiffin had been partaken of, and the party photographed by the official photographer of the Japanese Army, General Stoessel, who still appeared much hurt at the refusal of General Nogi to accept his charger, had the animal brought into the compound in front of the cottage, and mounting, put him through his paces, in order to demonstrate that the horse was worthy of acceptance as a gift from one General to another. The two Generals then retired to their respective quarters, a Japanese staff officer accompanying General Stoessel to his residence in the city.

CHAPTER XXIX

The real strength of the garrison—The munitions of war and food supplies taken over by the Japanese—Had Port Arthur served its usefulness? and if not, why did General Stoessel surrender?—What a visit to the captured section of the eastern fortridge revealed about the placing of the fortress artillery, and the manner in which it suffered from the Japanese bombardment—The possibilities of a further defence of the position—The transfer of the prisoners to Chang-ling-tzu and Dalny—The physical fitness of the men—The last of the defender of Port Arthur.

It was only when the committees of Japanese officers, detailed under the terms of the document of capitulation to take over the fortress and the munitions of war and stores therein, got to work that the first accurate information was obtained of the real strength of the garrison and its position with regard to ammunition and food supplies. This information was of a sufficiently startling nature to absolutely amaze the Headquarters Staff of the Japanese Army. General Stoessel, in his last report to the Czar, had stated that there were ten thousand men under arms in Port Arthur, and that they were all ill. In a previous report, dated the 28th of December, three days before the surrender, he stated "that the passive endurance of the enemy's eleven-inch shells, the impossibility of reply for the want of ammunition, the outbreak of scurvy and the loss of officers, caused a daily diminution of the defence." This was precisely the condition of affairs that the Headquarters Staff of the Japanese Army believed

existed inside Port Arthur, except that they also had information to the effect that the garrison was suffering from want of food supplies, and that the soldiers were reduced on that account to eating horse-flesh and bread made of a mixture of coarse grains. It was only when the committees got to work that the utter inaccuracy of this picture was brought to light. It was found upon investigation that there were over twenty-eight thousand soldiers and sailors in the garrison capable of bearing arms, exclusive of volunteers and non-combatants, who numbered over four thousand. There were, in addition, some sixteen thousand sick and wounded in the hospitals. The ammunition taken over amounted to over eighty-two thousand rounds for big guns, and over two million rounds for rifles, besides quantities of both sorts which had been dumped into the harbour. The food supplies included over seven hundred tons of flour, over eighty tons of crushed wheat, some forty tons of mealie meal, over two tons of barley, nearly seven hundred tons of beans, over sixty tons of biscuit, about forty tons of corned beef, about four hundred tons of salt, over twenty tons of sugar, and over a ton of rice. In addition there were some nineteen hundred horses in fair condition. These were the stores in the military and naval depots, but in addition there was an enormous amount of food-stuffs in the hands of private firms and individuals which had not been requisitioned at all. There was an almost inexhaustible store of vodka, beer, champagne, and other wines—too great a store, was the significant comment of one of the Russian admirals to whom I spoke on the subject. But to be fair, it must be admitted

that none of the Russian officers after the fall even pretended that they had been short of food-stuffs. On that score all admitted that there was enough for the garrison to eat for months in the stores. These figures, which are taken from the official records, are sufficient to show that so far as food was concerned, and in a measure ammunition as well, a garrison nearly three times as large as General Stoessel's reports would indicate was capable of bearing arms, could have been fed, and could have fought for months longer. After the terms of capitulation had been signed, General Balaschoff, the chief of the Red Cross Society, and the medical officer of highest rank in the garrison, who was one of the Commissioners sent by General Stoessel to discuss and decide upon terms of surrender, intimated that there were over twenty thousand sick and wounded in the hospitals who were without medicines, bandages, or proper food. This statement was in the main absolutely correct, except that some four thousand of the alleged sick were malingerers, who rose from their beds and walked out with the garrison when they learned that all the sick and wounded were to be set free and sent back to Russia, instead of being taken as prisoners of war to Japan and kept there until the war was over. There were about sixteen thousand sick and wounded who were suffering, and whose necessary wants had to be immediately supplied by the medical corps of the victorious army.

With over twenty-five thousand trained troops able to bear arms, officered by some thirteen hundred trained officers, including ten generals and three admirals, all of whom had been, and

could have been, well fed and clothed for months longer,—short of ammunition, it is true, but with enough to carry on, at least for a time,—the natural question is, Why did General Stoessel surrender? The defence of Port Arthur served two purposes in the Russian cause. Primarily, of course, it was the naval base. Towards the end the fleet had been practically imprisoned there, but the defence of Admiral Wiren, who had been promoted from the post of captain of the cruiser *Bayan* to be Admiral of the Fleet after the death of Admiral Whitgeft, for his inactivity was, that his only hope lay in awaiting the co-operation of the Baltic Fleet to raise the blockade. To have attempted to give battle to the superior force of the enemy would have been, according to his contention, to have ruined every chance of regaining naval supremacy. The delay of the Baltic Fleet in starting from Russia and arriving in Far Eastern waters, and the destruction of his own warships after the capture of 203 Metre Hill, removed that hope, and with it one of the reasons for the defence. There was, however, another purpose which the defence of Port Arthur served, of almost equal importance. The result of the battle of Mukden, when the Port Arthur army with its worn-out artillery had been relieved of duty before the beleaguered city and added to the strength of the Japanese Armies in the North, shows that the continuation of the defence of Port Arthur until after the battle of Liaoyang robbed the Japanese of a decisive victory at that time, and compelled them to remain idle upon the banks of the Shaho for three months, until General Nogi reinforced them with his veteran fighters. All this delay

helped the enemy, but despite his added strength, when the battle of Mukden took place, General Kuropatkin was hopelessly beaten, because of the presence of the army which had been detained at Port Arthur when the battle of Liaoyang had been fought.

The reason given by General Stoessel, that there were only ten thousand men under arms, and that they were all ill, is no good reason for surrender, for there were over twenty-five thousand soldiers and sailors in the garrison who were strong enough and well enough to tramp twenty odd miles from Port Arthur to Ya-hu-thwei, and from there to rail head at Chang-ling-tzu. More than that, they were compelled to live for days in the open during winter, with snow upon the ground. The fact is that the vast majority of these men were in splendid condition, looked well fed, well clothed, and bore not a trace of the scurvy and other ills so pathetically dwelt upon by General Stoessel in his report to the Czar. And these men were not cowards either, for the story of the fight they put up during the lifetime of General Kondrachenko, is enough to make that view impossible. It is true the sick and wounded were in a deplorable condition, but that is bound to be the case during a siege. If the statement made by General Stoessel in his report, to the effect that the Japanese bombarded the hospitals in Port Arthur, is true, it is marvellous that they only succeeded in hitting one hospital with a single shell, which did not do any damage to the sick and wounded. The language of the last report of the Russian Commander-in-Chief indicated that he feared carnage in the streets if the place was taken by assault,

for he stated that he intended taking measures to prevent such carnage. The step he took, of course, was surrender. There were some five hundred non-combatants in the city, including women and children, and among them Madame Stoessel. But it was not essential that any of them should have been there, for when the siege began, by instructions from the Mikado, the Japanese offered to receive all non-combatants and transport them to a neutral port from Dalny. Besides, hundreds left after that, and were allowed to do so by the blockading warships of the Japanese Navy. But even if the worst had come, and the city had been taken by assault, there would have been no wholesale massacre in the streets, as General Stoessel seems to have feared, for the Russian garrison would not have given the very strong incentive for such conduct that the Chinese did ten years previous, by exhibiting the mutilated heads of Japanese officers and soldiers who had fallen into their hands impaled upon poles in and about the city. The Japanese soldier is certainly a savage when he fights, so are the best of all soldiers when they fight well, but he is a generous foe when the heat of battle is over. It is evident also, from what took place at the council of war called by himself and attended by the officers of highest rank in the garrison only three days before the surrender, that General Stoessel had not the support of the majority of his officers in what he did. It seems that only three out of twenty-two sided with him. It certainly appears, therefore, that General Stoessel did the surrendering, and not the garrison which had put up the splendid previous defence. What his real reasons were have not yet been made public.

The full measure of the terrible effectiveness of the explosion of the dynamite mines upon the guarding forts, and the destruction wrought upon the battery positions on the ridge in rear by the bombardment of the Japanese artillery, could only be had in walking over and examining the positions after the suspension of hostilities. Upon the crest of the ridge, the very faulty manner in which the Russian artillery positions had been selected and the guns placed became painfully evident. From the lofty crest of the highest peak of Wantai, the weakness of the enemy's line of defence at this its most vulnerable point was apparent, for one was able to look down into the very heart of the city beyond, and see every part of both towns and the harbour. From the village of Shuishi we climbed the West Urhlung forthill and examined the huge pile of ruins which had a few days before been a modern fort defended by a garrison of some four hundred troops. Under this heterogeneous mass of shattered concrete, broken guns, and general débris, were the bodies of some two hundred and fifty Russian troops. In rear of the fort were the twisted casemates in which the survivors of the garrison, some hundred and sixty officers and men, had been imprisoned by the force of the explosions, and disentombed by the Japanese, to become prisoners of war. The East Urhlung fort presented a similar picture of utter and complete destruction. From the piles of ruins caused by the explosions it was quite impossible to gain even an idea of the shape or interior plans of either of these two forts. To the ridge in rear we then made our ways, over slopes torn to pieces and literally paved with exploded shells and

fragments, through the terribly battered enceinte behind the old Chinese Wall. Before us stood the supporting fort of West Urhlung, standing sentinel at the extreme western end of the ridge and overlooking the gorge of the Shuishi Valley. It was still garrisoned by Russian soldiers, whom we could see pacing up and down inside the parapets with their long greatcoats and fur caps. Yes, we could visit the fort, the captain of artillery who had kindly consented to be our guide, affirmed. The sergeant in charge of the advance line of Japanese pickets was summoned, and preceded by him we approached the Russian lines about the fort. We were ordered to halt, and after vainly endeavouring to explain to the sentry what we wished, our friend the Japanese officer tried to push past, but he was brought up with a quick turn by the Russian sentry, who immediately brought down his bayoneted rifle. The Japanese sergeant looked furious at this affront offered to his officer, but the Captain laughed, spoke a few quick words to the sergeant in Japanese, and turning to us, said, "The soldier was right; it was his duty to stop us." Just then a Russian non-commissioned officer, who had been sent for, appeared. He spoke English well. Did we wish to walk over the fort? That was our desire we informed him. He would be pleased to take us round. Then there was a short conversation between the sentry and his non-commissioned officer, during which the soldier evidently explained what had occurred. The Russian sergeant at once turned to us and said that he was sorry we had been inconvenienced, but that it had been entirely his fault. The sentry had orders to allow

no one to pass, but to call the sergeant of the guard. He had unfortunately not been within call when we arrived, and the sentry had been unable to make us understand that he wished us to wait a moment. There was no objection to our seeing the fort, but the orders were that all visitors were to be taken round by a non-commissioned officer. It was quite true the siege was practically over, but the Japanese had not taken this particular fort. These were still Russian lines. The Japanese had taken the ridge, and he waved his arm to indicate the heights to the eastward in the direction of Wantai, and those were their lines. The whole position had been surrendered, of course, but the garrisons of the uncaptured forts had not yet been withdrawn. There was a certain sense of pride in the manner in which the Russian sergeant intimated that this fort had not been captured, which indicated the stubborn, soldierly qualities of the rank and file of the garrison at Port Arthur. We were then taken over the fort, which was full of Russian troops. It was nothing more than a well-constructed field work, but its defences were cleverly arranged. A half-dozen machine guns and two long lines of infantry trenches commanded the west slope from the level of the gorge of the Shuishi Valley, upon which were still lying scores of bodies of Japanese soldiers, some of the thousand who had fallen during the assault made by the column under command of Major-General Nakamura upon the night of the 26th of November. It had been an awful night, the sergeant said, and the garrison had suffered a good deal from shell fire, but the Japanese infantry had never got up to the fort. They had

The Russian "H" Battery Position. Damage done by Japanese Shell Fire.

had too far to go in the open, and the searchlights showed where they were. Yes, the Japanese were good soldiers, they did not seem to mind being killed.

After taking leave of the Russian sergeant, we made our way along the ridge from Eboshiyama to the "H" and New Panlung battery positions. Every yard of the crest bore evidence of the destructiveness of the Japanese artillery fire. In the battery positions not a single gun remained unbroken. Behind the neck between the "H" position and Wantai Hill there was a battery of 11-inch howitzers. These guns were placed in the most exposed positions almost upon the crest of the hill, and had consequently suffered tremendously. Two of them were quite destroyed and the third had its carriage damaged. The first gun had evidently been hit as it was being loaded, and practically the whole gun detachment had been killed. Their mangled bodies lay unburied where they had fallen. The scene around this gun was terrible. A hard climb over loose earth powdered by the explosion of shells and dynamite grenades brought us to the crest of Wantai. Two great 6-inch guns, with their long barrels protruding over the crest, filled up practically the entire space upon the top. Here was the road to Port Arthur which the Japanese Army had been endeavouring for five months to open. Wantai not only meant Port Arthur, but the position commanded the ridge east and west. The North Keekwan fort and the "Q" battery position were simply a repetition of the scenes of destruction we had already looked at. Upon the crest of the big East Keekwan Hill the scene was simply inde-

scribable. Four heavily charged mines had been exploded by the Russians themselves on the night of New Year's Day under each of the batteries. The effect of the explosions had been awful. Everything was completely wrecked. Heavy guns had been thrown from their mountings and hurled down the slopes. Ruin and devastation could not have been more complete. The obvious conclusion from all this was that the Russian artillery positions had in general been badly chosen. No attempt had been made to utilize the reverse slopes of the hills or small valleys in rear of batteries of howitzers and mortars, which had instead been placed almost upon the crest-line. Heavy guns in many instances had been posted in most exposed positions on forts or the summits of hills, without a vestige of cover of any sort, and no trouble had been taken to prepare alternative positions for field artillery. The large number of guns damaged, and artillery material of all kind that littered the ground between the West Urhlung fort and the East Keekwan Hill, bore eloquent testimony to the faultiness of the Russian dispositions and the accuracy of their opponent's fire. This was in striking contrast to the manner in which the Japanese had placed their artillery. They had made admirable use of accidents of ground, millet crops, dummy guns and emplacements, to conceal their batteries and deceive the enemy. Their losses in both men and material were consequently small.

In some respects the line fortified by the Russians was admirably suited for defence, affording as it did a clear field of fire, good command, and excellent mutual support between the different forts and battery positions. There were many

The big East Keekwan Hill Battery Positions, blown up by the Russians on New Year's night after General Stoessel had offered to surrender.

good observation posts, and the reverse slopes of the hills formed ideal locations for batteries of howitzers and mortars. There was, however, one grave and incurable defect. The line of defence was too near the city, so that magazines, workshops, supply depots, and barracks were under constant shell fire from the Japanese position, which was even more suitable for attack than the Russian for defence. A line of high hills parallel to, and about four thousand yards from, the outer Russian forts, gave excellent facilities for observation, and at the same time afforded cover for ammunition and supply depots; while the reverse slopes of the hills, and the numerous low foothills in front, gave suitable artillery positions. Moreover, the numerous ravines running at right angles to the Russian line allowed of troops being brought up under cover with comparatively little labour close to the points selected for attack, while the steep banks of a river-bed at the bottom of the valley separating the hostile forces permitted of reserves being massed within easy supporting distance of their comrades in the advanced trenches. The question whether, under these conditions, the citadel was in immediate danger of capture is extremely doubtful. It was obvious from examination that, with the guarding forts from the East Keekwan Hill to the western extremity of the line of defence east of the city taken, and the battery positions upon the crest of the ridge in rear pounded to pieces, the first line was bound to be pierced in a short time, no matter how gallant the defence. A second line was possible, but it had not been prepared, and in addition was in a large measure dominated from the first, as were also the city

and harbour. On the west side of the city, the inner line of defence from Ya-hu-thwei to the Itzeshan fort could have been successfully defended for a considerable time. Then there were the Tiger's Tail and Lao-tieh-shan, the Chair Hill, and the east groups of forts, none of which had ever been even approached by the opposing infantry, and they were all strong, well built and equipped forts. Had General Stoessel been resolute to the end, these positions were capable of a defence which could only have been overcome by weeks of sapping and mining. The fact that no attempt whatever was made to prepare and provision these positions for a continuation of the defence, shows that capitulation had been decided upon some time before it actually took place.

The transfer of prisoners from Port Arthur to Ya-hu-thwei was concluded on the morning of the 7th of January. The soldiers were disarmed and mustered upon the large parade ground on the northern outskirts of the city, and accompanied by their officers marched to Ya-hu-thwei. The first lot of about four thousand marched from Ya-hu-thwei around the west flank of the Japanese position to Chang-ling-tzu railway station on the 6th. Day after day from that time they kept arriving in four and five thousand lots. Tents were erected for the officers at Chang-ling-tzu, but no attempt was made to provide shelters for the rank and file, probably because there were some twenty-eight thousand of them. Firewood was served out to them, but they had to sleep in the open until their turn came to be taken on to Dalny. The majority of these prisoners I saw at the end of their long march. They cer-

tainly did not look like sick men. They had the appearance of being well fed, and were certainly well and warmly clothed. The faces of many showed the effect of the strain they had been under for so many months. It took something like ten days after the arrival of the first lot at Chang-ling-tzu before the whole number were transported to Dalny. From there the rank and file were taken to Japan in shiploads, where they were comfortably quartered in several districts. The officers were sent from Dalny to different ports in Japan as first-class passengers upon returning transports. General Stoessel, accompanied by his family, and a number of the officers of higher rank among the garrison, left Port Arthur on the morning of the 12th, and departed for Dalny about noon. The former commander of the Russian garrison seemed to have aged considerably during the seven days that had intervened since I had seen him last in the village of Shuishi after the surrender. His face wore an anxious expression, as if he felt that the worst of his personal troubles lay before and not behind him. Madame Stoessel, accompanied by six orphaned children of officers who had fallen during the siege, each armed with a doll, and a number of ladies, most of whom were in mourning, arrived about the same time in droskys. The Russian officers were all smartly dressed in new uniforms, and presented a striking contrast to the officers of the victorious army who were now masters of Port Arthur. They did not seem to feel their humiliating position half as much as the company officers who had accompanied the rank and file, and for whom one was compelled

to feel sorry. There was a profusion of pet dogs. Almost every officer had oné, some two, and their sole concern seemed to be that they, and their dogs, should not be left behind. Major-General Ijichi, the Chief of the Army Headquarters Staff, arrived a few minutes before the train started, and said good-bye to General Stoessel, who stepped into a covered railway carriage which had been specially provided for him, and the train pulled out, having on board the defender of Port Arthur.

General Stoessel on the Station Platform at Chang-ling-tzu, waiting to proceed under parole to Russia.

CHAPTER XXX

The triumphal entry of the victorious army into the captured city—The condition of Port Arthur—The effect of the Japanese bombardment—The damage done to the warships—The opinions expressed by Russian officers regarding the possibilities of a further defence—The last days of the siege inside the city—The feast of the living, and a tribute to the dead.

THE formal entry of the Japanese Army into Port Arthur was not an imposing spectacle. The rank and file had too long been engaged in the serious business of taking the place—a business in which life weighed in the balance—to evince any deep or enthusiastic interest in such a purely spectacular performance. At no time could the Japanese be called barrack-square soldiers. Their strong point is use, not show. Yet they were every inch soldiers—these sturdy, brown-faced veterans who, after so many desperate struggles, had at last humbled the power of Russia, and crumbled the defences of her great fortress in the Far East with their artillery. Before dawn on the morning of the 13th of January the troops of the Army began to assemble on the plains north of Shuishi. General Nogi, with the Headquarters Staff of the Army, arrived at the outskirts of Port Arthur about half-past ten o'clock, and the memorable entry into the captured city began. The route selected was from a point near the West Urhlung fort to the east of Pai-yui-shan fort, through the Old Town, along the base of Pai-

yui-shan hill, and over the bridge across the river mouth to the New Town, upon the eastern outskirts of which there is a small parade ground. Here General Nogi and his staff took up their positions, and the troops defiled past in column of route. Some seven thousand men, including two hundred rank and file from each regiment and a proportionate number from the cavalry, artillery, engineers, naval brigade, and every officer not on duty elsewhere, passed the saluting base. For two hours or more the procession of men with long khaki coats and bayoneted rifles over their shoulders lasted. Though they did not look well upon parade, the keenest critic would have been impressed. They were soldiers every man of them, even if their lines were not straight and their distances anything but correct. These were the men who had taken Port Arthur, and had proven their worth as soldiers upon many a bloody occasion. And the flags carried in front of each regiment, what a wealth of tragedy they had seen! Most of them were mere rags clinging to bare poles, but those rags were stained with the life-blood of many heroes. Scarcely one of them we had not seen carried up the bullet-swept slopes of the forthills, and planted ahead of the infantry advance. Annihilation only could keep those soldiers from following their flags. The gallant ninth division was given the place of honour in the van of this long procession of tried warriors; and rightly so, for they had occupied the centre of the great fighting line, and had taken the heaviest of the enemy's blows. At their head rode General Baron Oshima, the embodiment of the Samurai fighter of Old Japan, the man who assumed com-

mand of an indifferent division in the army some years ago in the Kanagawa district of Northern Japan, and taught it to fight as he had been taught in the old feudal days. And the sturdy, brown-faced men who followed were not only the soldiers under his command, they were his children as well, for he had been their Daimio, and they respected him in a parental sense as much as they revered him as their General. It is a wonderful spirit that made this division what it is. These were not the same soldiers who had gone up the slopes of the Panlung forts in August, and sought by downright courage to win Wantai and Port Arthur without a five months' siege. They were the brothers of those men who had died in that desperate attempt, but they were animated by the same spirit and commanded by the same General. And their flags, tattered and torn, mere fringes of gold hanging from a pole, what a wealth of the romance of war was in every thread of those fringes! There was the gallant seventh, with the flag which had been planted upon the corner of the trench-wall of the East Panlung fort, black with the life-blood of a dozen officers. The original regiment that had done those deeds, and essayed so bravely to take Wantai in August, were gone. The regiment had been wiped out; but the new men were those who completed what their fallen brothers had so nobly failed to do—they had taken Wantai, and with it Port Arthur. There was the first division, led by General Matzamura, the hero of Nanshan, made up of the sturdy regiments from the Tokyo districts, which had done all the desperate fighting upon the west flank, and in that terrible gorge of the Shuishi Valley. Their

flags, too, had seen many a bloody field, and were riddled into ribands by the enemy's bullets. The seventh division, with flags all new and men who had fought their first fight upon the slopes of 203 Metre Hill, and fought it well. Last came the eleventh division, led by Lieut.-General Samejima, the man whose personal courage had inspired his troops to capture by assault the first of the enemy's guarding forts upon the North Keekwan Hill. There were two regiments in this division with new flags. The old ones had been lost during the tragic attack made upon the big East Keekwan Hill in the assault made for the Emperor's sake on the 30th of October, and with them scores of brave men who had carried them too far into the enemy's lines. They had been honourably lost, but still they had been lost; and the men who now followed the new flags, one could plainly see, felt that loss. There were also the detachments from the artillery, composed of the biggest and strongest men in the army. They had played no unimportant part in the great game. It had required brains, skill, and courage, and these men had not been found wanting in any of the requirements. The naval brigades were like the sailors of most maritime countries, dare-devil chaps who would undertake anything, and succeed if human endurance and courage made it possible. These were the men, the kind of men, who defiled past their General, the man whose personal qualities and soldierly instincts gave him a strong personality which enabled him to inspire both officers and men under his command with the same rugged courage and determination to win which he possessed. General Nogi is a fighter of Old Japan.

No taint of Western civilizing influences has destroyed the spirit of the Samurai in him. He is of the old downright fighting school, who believe that men must die to win, and surely die if they fail to win. He had passed successfully through an ordeal which would have unhinged a weaker mind, but now his reward had come, and he was being honoured by the splendid army he so absolutely commanded, in the very centre of the captured Russian stronghold. He had received a summons from the Emperor to return to his native country and receive Imperial honours. His reply was characteristic of the man. He had done nothing to merit Imperial honours. There was still fighting to do in the North, and he implored permission to take his army there, and upon new fields do his best to earn the Imperial favour. What his first service was must be told in the story of the great victory won by the Japanese in the battle of Mukden.

For some unexplained reason none of the correspondents with the Japanese Army were permitted to enter Port Arthur until the morning of the day when the army entered. By that time the garrison had gone and the city swept and cleared. There remained only some few hundred non-combatants, some Russian labourers, and the sick and wounded in the hospitals. Though we had lost, through this restriction, the picture of what Port Arthur had been immediately after the surrender, there was still much of interest to be seen when we did go in upon the morning of the 13th of January. Many were the ingenious defences devised by the garrison to prevent the Japanese penetrating to the city through the

gorge of the Shuishi Valley, which we passed on our way to the captured city. They seemed to be so wholly unnecessary with Pai-yui-shan's huge bulk directly in front crowned with batteries of artillery, and the An-tzu-shan's and Urhlungs' upon either side of the narrow gorge. But they were there, endless lines of wire entanglements, protected trenches, *chevaux de frise* and *trous de loups*. At the entrance to the Old Town there was a great wooden gateway at which a Japanese sentry now stood. An open space guarded by infantry earthworks intervened between the gateway and the first narrow streets of the Old Town. The houses all seemed to be deserted, and a deep ravine on the way towards the dockyards had been converted into an elaborate system of bomb-proof shelters, to which the inhabitants of this portion of the town had evidently retired when the Japanese guns were engaged in bombarding the harbour and various depôts in that neighbourhood. Here there had been considerable damage done by artillery fire. The closer one got to the harbour front the greater the damage caused by shells and fire. The huge hospital of the Virgin Mary's Association was in this district, and it had been struck by a shell, for one gable end of the building was badly damaged. The storehouses, ammunition magazines, and workshops along the harbour front had been literally torn to pieces by shell fire. This was, however, the only district in the two towns which had suffered to any great extent, and it had suffered on account of its proximity to the harbour, and because it lay in the direct line of fire against the buildings upon the docks and the warships

in the east harbour. Farther to the eastward the Old Town had not suffered. Crossing the bridge over the lagoon at the mouth of the river, it became evident where much big-gun ammunition and many rifles had gone. Through the shallow water could be seen both rifles and shells, and we were told much larger quantities of both had been dumped into the deeper water from the docks. The New Town had not suffered much. Its large buildings of brick and stucco had to be examined carefully before any evidences of shell fire could be found. There were, however, terrible evidences of the effect of Japanese artillery fire in the large hospitals in both towns, in the thousands of wounded brought in from the fortress position. The harbour presented an impressive sight. The Russian warships had all been sunk. In the dock lay the mine-laying vessel, the *Amur*, upon her beam ends, and destroyed by fire and explosives. Close to the dock was the battleship *Retvezan* with her upper gun decks awash. Strung in a single line across the east harbour to the foot of Golden Hill were the other battleships, the *Peresviet*, *Poltava*, and *Pobieda*, and the cruisers *Bayan* and *Pallada*. Close inshore, lying upon her beam end, was the gunboat *Gilyak*, a total wreck. In other portions of the harbour and about its entrance were the gunboats *Djijit*, *Rasboynik*, and *Sabryack*, and the torpedo destroyers *Boeway*, *Silinuy*, *Buditelinuy*, *Strojewoy*, and *Ragjashchiy*. Besides, there were a large number of transports and smaller craft with the tops of their funnels and masts protruding from the water. The entire harbour looked what it was, a veritable naval cemetery. Outside, the battleship *Sevastopol* lay off the

Man-tou-shan promontory in twenty-five fathoms of water, and the gunboat *Otvazny* close to the entrance to the harbour also in deep water. The Japanese maintain that they will be able to repair all the warships inside two or three years. They may, but the contention of Admiral Wiren is that every warship in the harbour had her back broken by the explosion of torpedoes in the engine-rooms and shaft-tunnels.

After the march-past of the army we met several residents of Port Arthur, Germans and French, who had been left there to look after the property of large business houses during the siege. We were given the best tiffin we had eaten for many a day, including fresh meat, good bread, and all sorts of delicacies, with an abundance of champagne. All agreed that General Stoessel had not been the right man, and that he had done the surrendering against the judgment of the best officers in the garrison, though it was frankly admitted everyone was glad when it did come, except some of the officers and very many of the troops, who openly charged many things against General Stoessel after they had marched into the city from the positions and broken their rifles and thrown them into the harbour. The last days before, and the first days after, the Japanese came into the city had been awful. The rank and file of the garrison, when they came down from the positions and heard of the surrender, broke open bonded warehouses and liquor-stores and drank vodka until the streets were full of drunken soldiers. It was this condition of affairs that induced General Stoessel to make the request that the Japanese troops should be sent into the

city at once in order to preserve order. It was a wise request at the time, for the troops were in an ugly mood, but it was not the Russian labourers whom General Stoessel called thieves and rascals who were the cause of the trouble, but the same troops that had fought so well under command of General Kondrachenko. The most remarkable thing about the captured city was the healthy, well-fed appearance of the non-combatant population. The tiffin we had just enjoyed helped to explain it all. There were any quantity of privately owned stores of provisions in the place that could be had for a price, and no besieged city had ever been further away from anything approaching famine. These statements were in a large measure corroborated by statements made regarding the conditions which existed in the besieged city, by Russian officers whom I met on board ship returning from Dalny to Japan a few days later. Though their statements in many cases conflicted, there was a startling unanimity of opinion against the conduct of General Stoessel, on the ground that the position could have held out longer, and a conviction was also strongly expressed that it would have held out much longer if General Kondrachenko had lived.

Port Arthur had been won, the fortress taken over, the garrison removed as prisoners of war to Japan, and the victorious army had made its formal entry into the city, and returned to its camps outside. There remained one great ceremony which General Nogi determined should take place before his army travelled North to take on a new sphere of activity against the enemy. He

desired to give a feast to the officers who had served so well, and pay a last tribute to those who had died so bravely. Arrangements were accordingly made to give a grand banquet to all the officers of the army in the village of Shuishi, while on the high-lands to the north an altar was erected, before which the General and his army were to pay tribute to those who had fallen during the siege. The conception of the double event was in every sense worthy of the man, and it was carried out as he conceived it. Both these events were to take place upon the day following the formal entry into Port Arthur, the memorial service to the dead at ten o'clock in the morning, and the feast to the officers immediately after noon. For days the army service corps had been busily engaged preparing for an open-air banquet. A large square of level ground had been enclosed by a fence made of Chinese mats, with a triumphal arch at one end to serve as an entrance. Inside the enclosure were long rows of temporary tables, with a traverse table at the farther end, while directly in rear was a small rostrum, and upon one side of the enclosure was a band-stand. Never even in its halcyon days had Shuishi village been so well populated. General Nogi with his staff officers, accompanied by the Generals of divisions and brigades of his army, entered this immense compound shortly after one o'clock, and took his place at the head of the traverse table at the upper end of the enclosure. Inside twenty minutes all his guests had assembled. It was a wonderful sight. There must have been at least two thousand officers present. They came from every division, these men who had led their commands in so

many hard-fought fights upon the slopes of the surrounding forthills, which were now garrisoned by their soldiers. When the great enclosure was crowded to overflowing, General Nogi mounted the rostrum, and with a huge glass of saké held high above his head, proposed the health of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. The enthusiasm with which that, the only toast proposed, was honoured was enough to take one's breath away. The great gathering of officers seemed to have suddenly gone mad. Ordinarily they are quiet men these Japanese officers, but on this occasion pandemonium reigned supreme, and the strains of the national anthem played by the band were lost in a hurricane of "Banzais." About two hours after, General Nogi took his leave. He tried to escape without being seen; but he had not gone ten steps from the top table towards the entrance before he was seized and carried out of the enclosure high above the heads of a score of enthusiastic officers, amid a universal "Banzai." Long after the shades of night had fallen the celebration was kept up with enthusiasm that knew no bounds. The "Oki Banzai" was due these officers who had fought so long and so hard, and they had it.

The memorial service to the fallen was one of the simplest and most impressive sights imaginable. With that rare conception of the eternal fitness of things, General Nogi had selected the highest point on the high-lands north of the village of Shuishi upon which to erect a simple Shinto altar, whereon to make his offerings in the name of his army to the departed spirits of those who had fallen during the many months of the siege. The selection of the place was ideal, for it commanded

a wonderful view of the eastern fortridge, from the East Keekwan Hill to the West Urhlung fort, the gorge of the Shuishi Valley, and the line of defence west of Port Arthur, with the lofty crest of 203 Metre Hill in the distance. An almost impenetrable veil of mist hung over the valley and shrouded the crests of the ridges on the morning of the 14th of January, as we made our way to the place where the memorial service was to take place. General Nogi, attended by his staff, was already there. At first the mist was so heavy that it was impossible to see more than forty or fifty yards, but just before the ceremony began the sun came out and the veil slowly lifted, disclosing the wonderful spectacle. Upon the top of the small hillock stood the altar, in the rear the priests, General Nogi and his staff, with all the foreign military attachés and correspondents. In the form of a half-circle, extending from the base of the hill far out on to the plain, was the victorious army, drawn up in divisions, brigades, regiments, and companies, their fixed bayonets glittering in the sunlight. It was the first time any of us had seen the whole army of one hundred and twenty thousand men thus concentrated in one place. The panorama was wonderful in the extreme. Attended by a single staff officer, the man who had twice captured Port Arthur, in full view of his victorious army, walked slowly up to the altar, made most profound obeisance before it, and then, standing erect, read an invocation to the spirits of the departed in a voice that could be heard by a majority of those in the front lines about the foot of the hill. For hours afterwards the troops were taken up in companies, while officers

General Baron Nogi reading his invocation to the spirits of the departed after the fall of Port Arthur.

and men bowed in solemn obeisance before the altar erected to the memory of their fallen comrades. No religious ceremony could have been more profoundly impressive, and no temple could have been more splendidly appropriate. The invocation read by General Nogi was—

"I, Nogi Maresky, Commander-in-Chief of the Third Imperial Army, celebrate a fête in honour of those brave officers and men who fell during the siege, with saké and many offerings.

"From the date of our army's landing in the Kwantung peninsula, over two hundred and ten days since, you have gone forward with such bravery and fought battles with such gallantry that you have met death from fire and sword. Others of you have died from sickness and disease. I wish to tell you that your noble sacrifice has not been in vain. The troops of the enemy inside the stronghold of Port Arthur have been utterly defeated and the fortress has at last surrendered. This glorious victory is due in a large measure to your indomitable courage and bravery.

"I, Maresky, with many of you, took a solemn oath to achieve victory or accomplish death. Surviving the struggle, I have received the warmest thanks from our Supreme Commander the Emperor. It is not meet that I should monopolize all this glory. With you, the spirits of those who fought and died to win the great result, I desire to share the glory. My heart is oppressed with sadness when I think of all you who have paid the price of our victory, and whose spirits are now in the Great Hereafter.

"I have chosen the place for this fête so that it commands a view of the hills, the valleys, the

streams, and the forts which were the scenes of your glorious deaths, and which have been stained with your life-blood. First of all I have cleared the ground. Then I have erected this altar upon which I make my offerings and invoke your spirits, hoping that you will come, partake of our offerings, and share the glory of our victory over the enemy."

THE END

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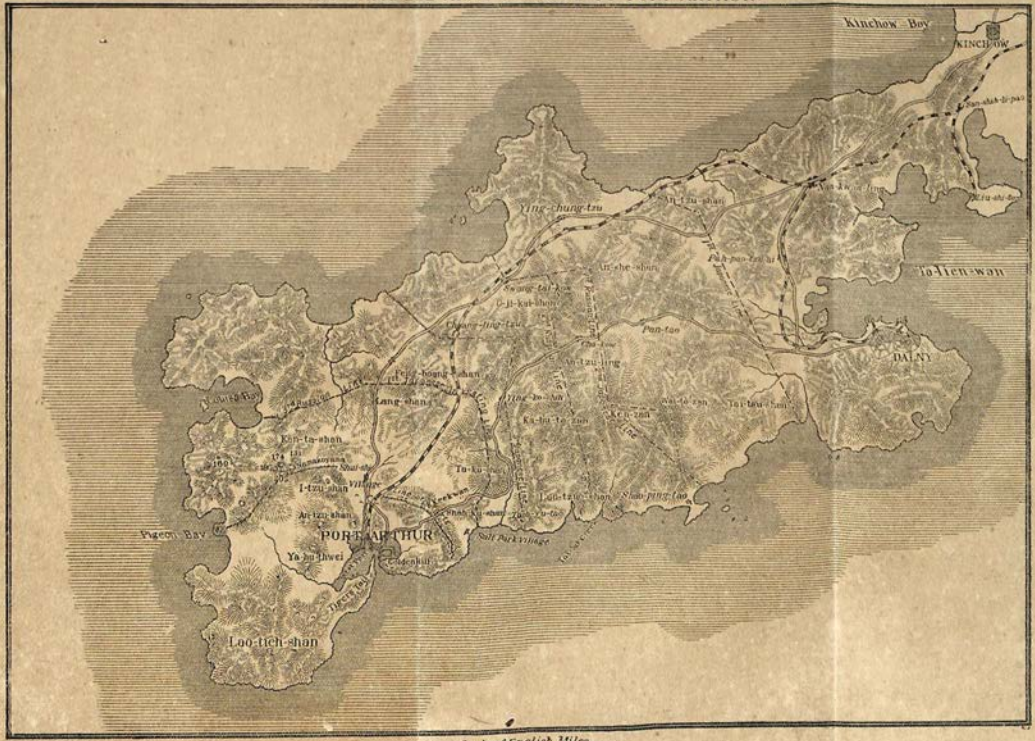
SKETCH MAP OF KWANGTUNG PENINSULA
(SHOWING JAPANESE ARMY ADVANCE TO PORT-ARTHUR)



SKETCH MAP OF THE PORT ARTHUR POSITION.
(SHOWING RUSSIAN LINE OF DEFENCE)

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